



No. 17

# TIM HULST

COWBOY STAR OF THE MOVIES

10¢



in this issue

2 thrilling tales of  
**THE GHOST RIDER!**

Read "The Hooks of Horror!"

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# TIM HOLT'S WESTERN ALBUM

CAUGHT in the murderous gunfire that rocks the range when a crooked gambler turns rustler boss to collect a debt, young Robert Clarke receives aid from Tim, Chito, and Jacqueline White.

GRIPPING words must be issuing from Tim's mouth, judging by the intent look on the gambler's hard face. Then, too, there's the grip of Tim's hands!

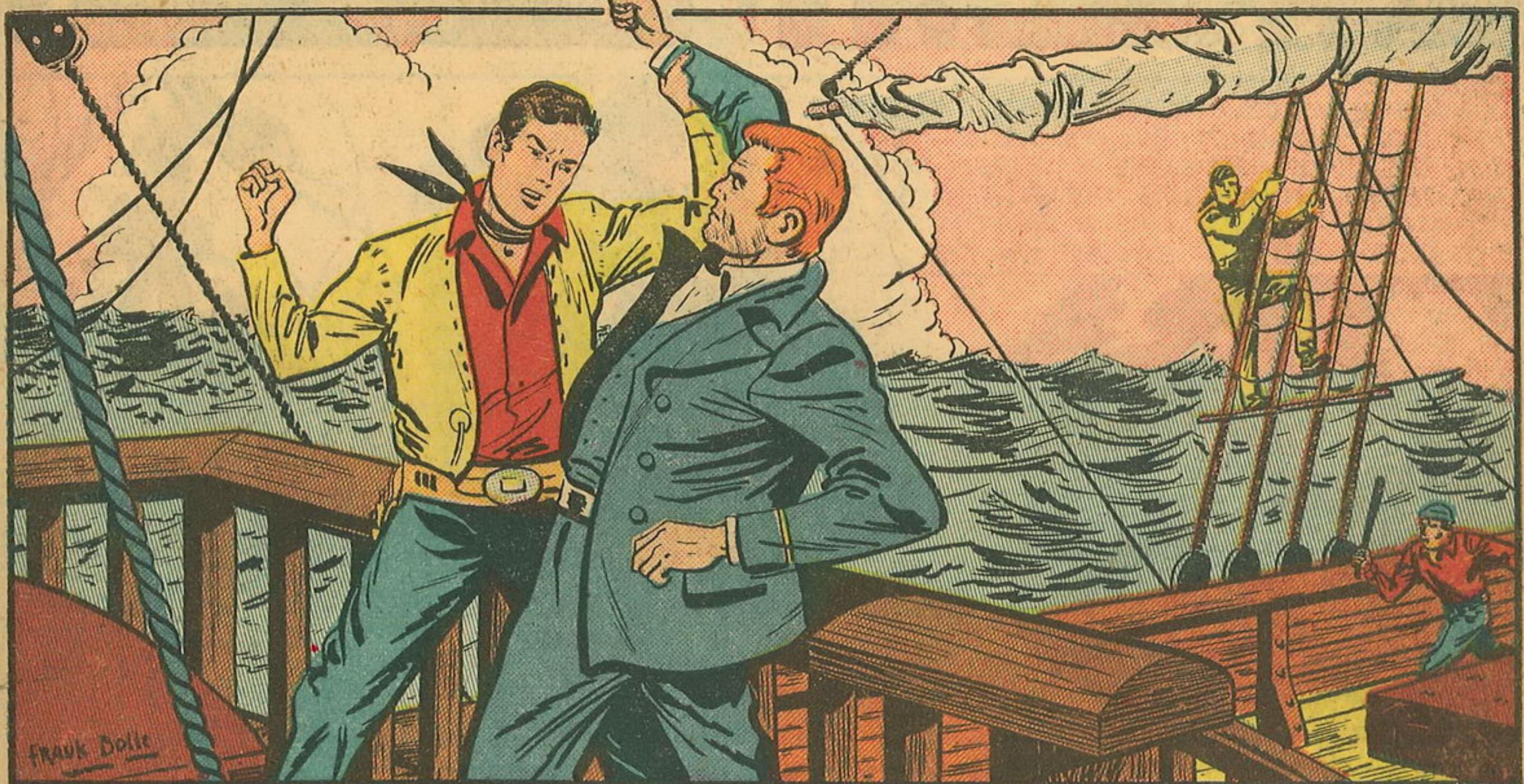


TIM HOLT

# TIM HOLT

MUTINY ON THE HIGH SEAS! FISTS AND BELAYING PINS! GUNS THAT AIM TO KILL! DESPERATE MEN WHO STOP AT NOTHING! AND AS HIS CREW REBELS UNDER HIS IRON HEEL, CAPTAIN "ROCKY SHORES" ROARS AND BULLIES AND THREATENS—ONLY TO FIND TIM HOLT LETTING GO THE ANCHOR RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA-GOING SAGA OF—

"THE COWBOY AND THE CLIPPER!"



THE FOREDECK OF THE YANKEE CLIPPER, VERMONT, SWARMS WITH MEN MADE DESPERATE BY PANIC...

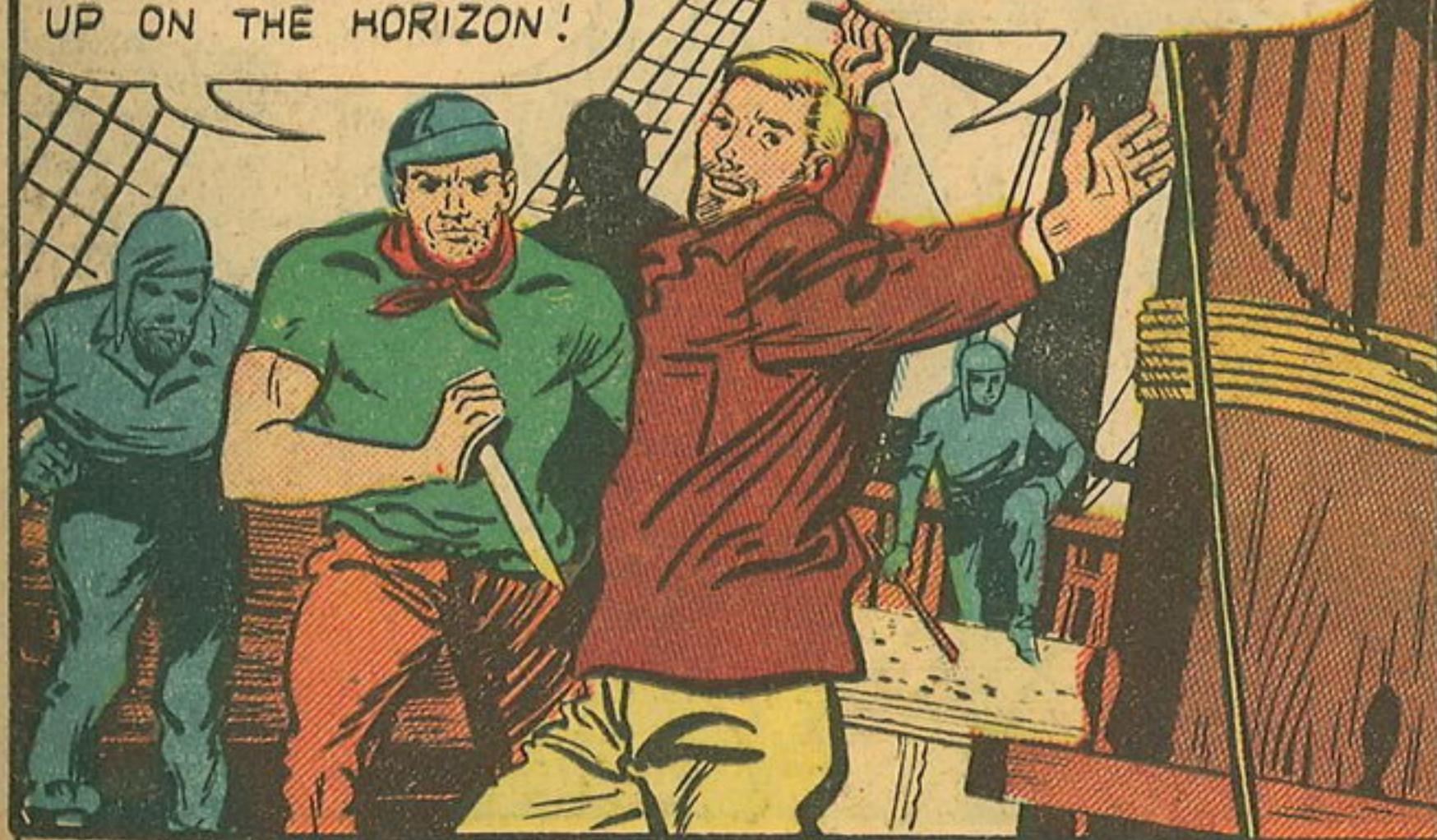
WE'LL NOT GO INTO THAT OCEAN... NOT WITH THE STORM THAT'S COMIN' UP ON THE HORIZON!

WE NEED REPAIRS—FRESH FRUIT TO PREVENT SCURVY—CLEAN WATER!

ON THE CAPTAIN'S BRIDGE—FIGHTING TO WREST THE LOADED COLT FROM THE CAPTAIN'S HAIRY HAND—is TIM HOLT!

AVAST, YE MUSCLE-HEADED COW-TENDER! I'LL FLING YE TO THE FISHES!

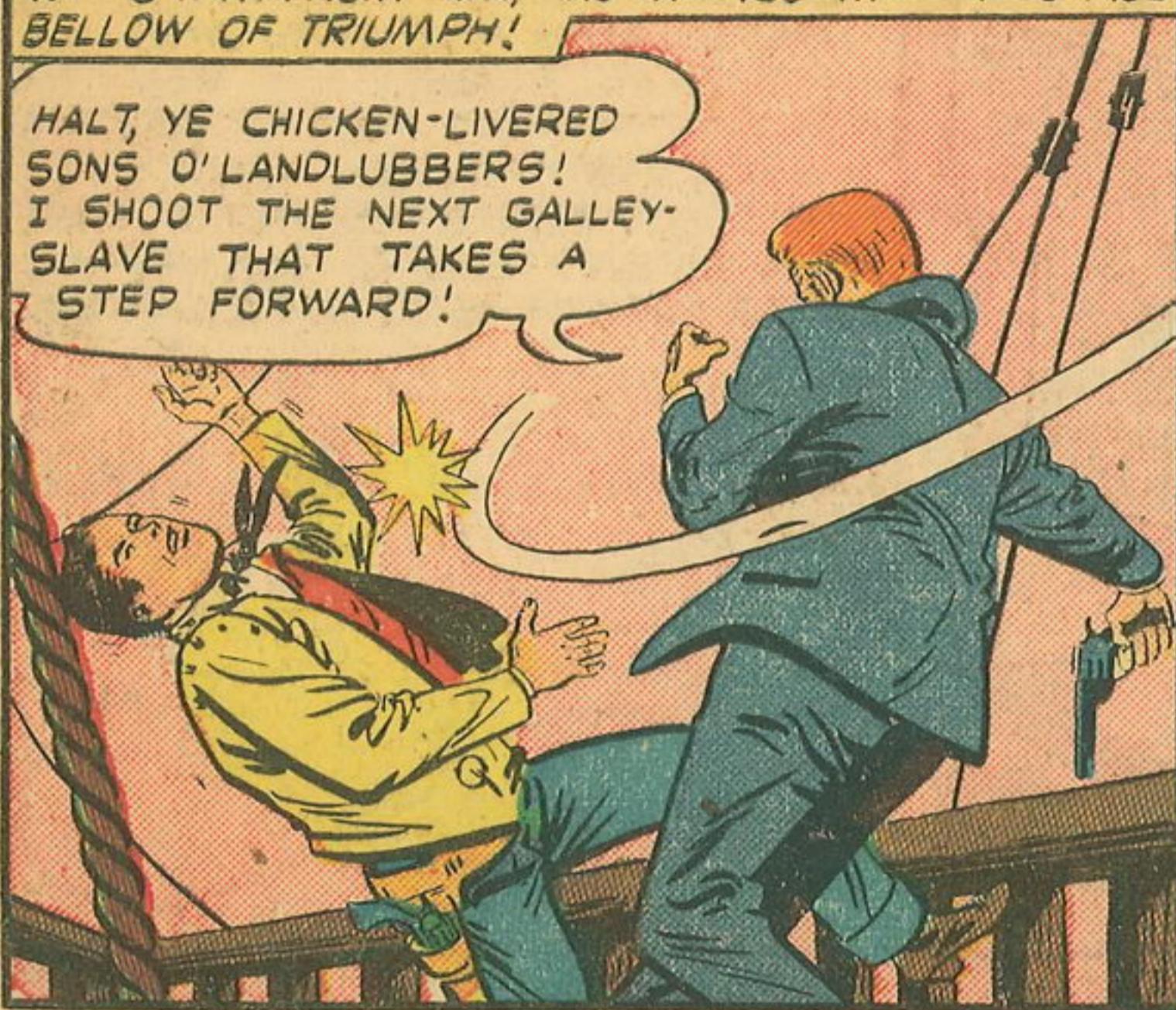
NO GUNS, CAPTAIN! YOU CAN'T SHOOT DOWN INNOCENT MEN!



# TIM HOLT

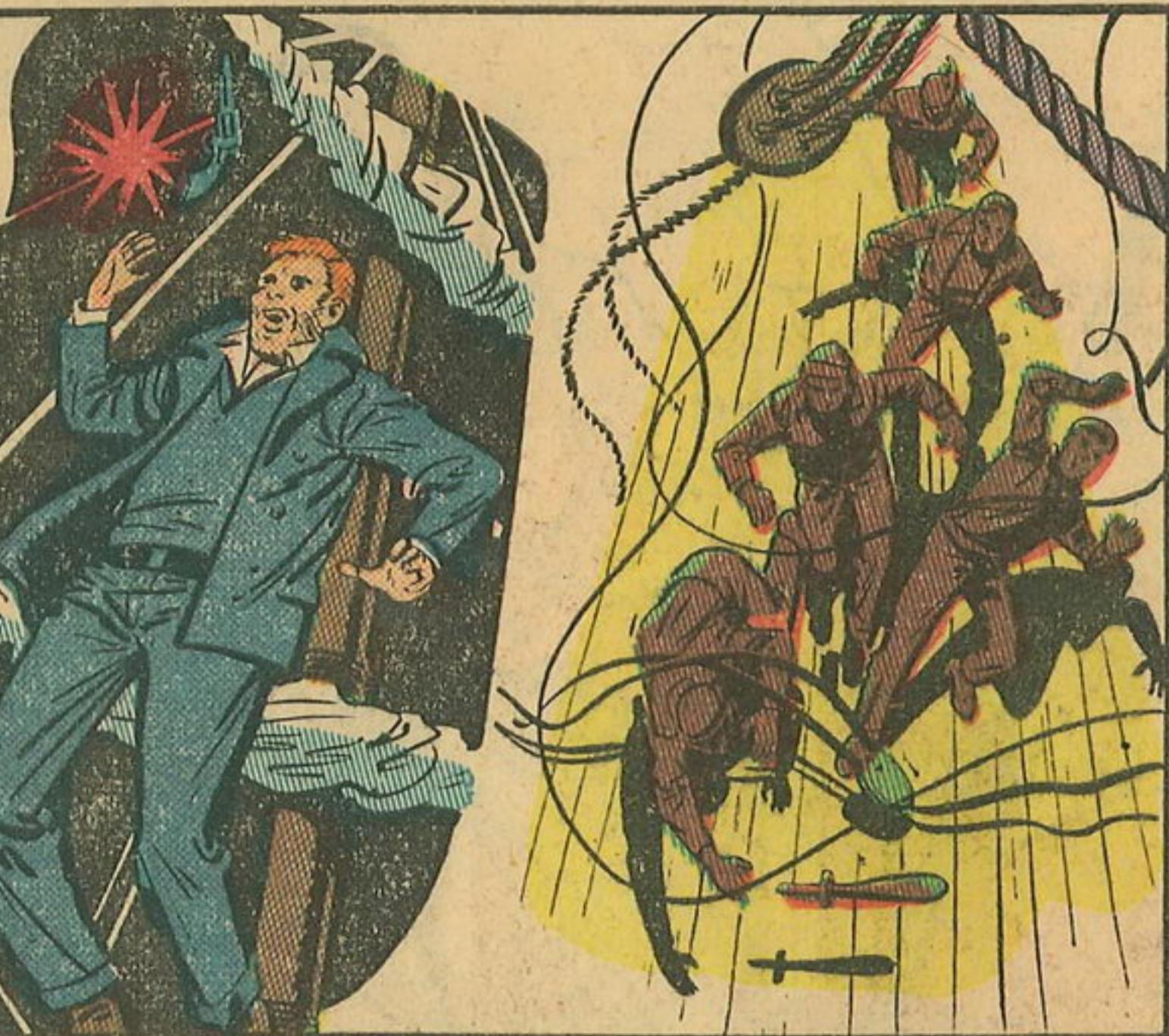
WITH A BERSERK HEAVE, THE MADDENED CAPTAIN WHIPS TIM FROM HIM, AND WHIRLS WITH A HOARSE BELLOW OF TRIUMPH!

HALT, YE CHICKEN-LIVERED SONS O' LANDLUBBERS! I SHOOT THE NEXT GALLEY-SLAVE THAT TAKES A STEP FORWARD!



WE DON'T GO TO OUR DEATHS IN THAT STORM THAT'S BREWIN'!

SHOOT! YOU'LL GET ONLY A COUPLE OF US!



THUMBING HIS COLT PEACEMAKERS, TIM LEAPS FORWARD. ONE SHOT BLASTS THE CAPTAIN'S GUN FROM HIS NERVELESS FINGERS! ANOTHER, AND THEN ANOTHER, CUTS THE RIGGING SO THAT IT FALLS — TO DROP LIKE A GIGANTIC NET OVER THE RAGE-MADDENED SAILORS, ON THE DECK!



YOU ARE STOP THEE MUTINEE, BUT YOU STEAL MAKING BAD ENEMY EEN THAT CAPTAIN!

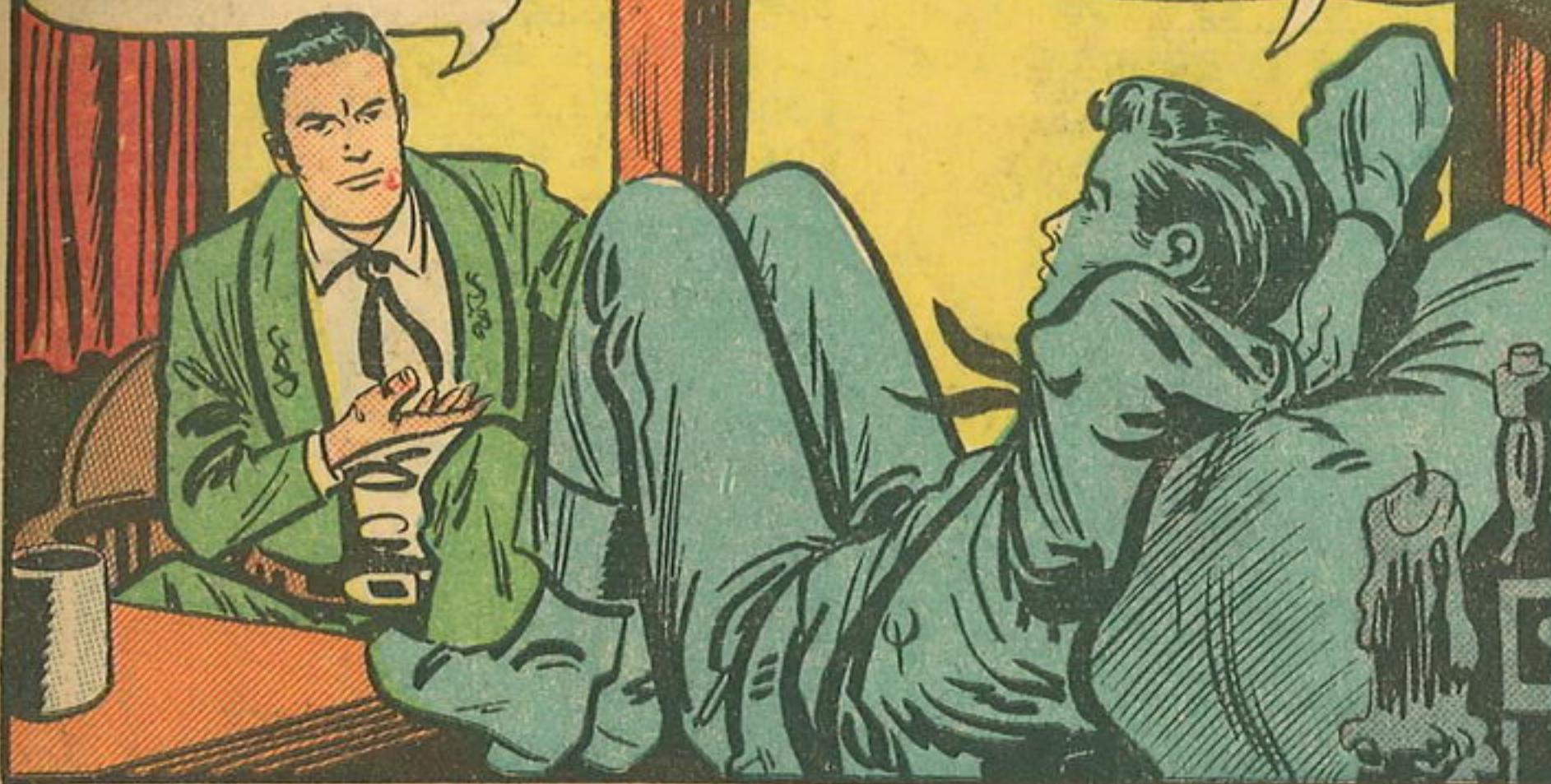
CAN'T HELP THAT, CHITO. IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO SAVE THOSE SAILOR'S LIVES. BESIDES, WE'LL BE AT THE END OF OUR JOURNEY, SHORTLY. THINK YOUR FOLKS WILL KNOW YOU?



# TIM HOLT

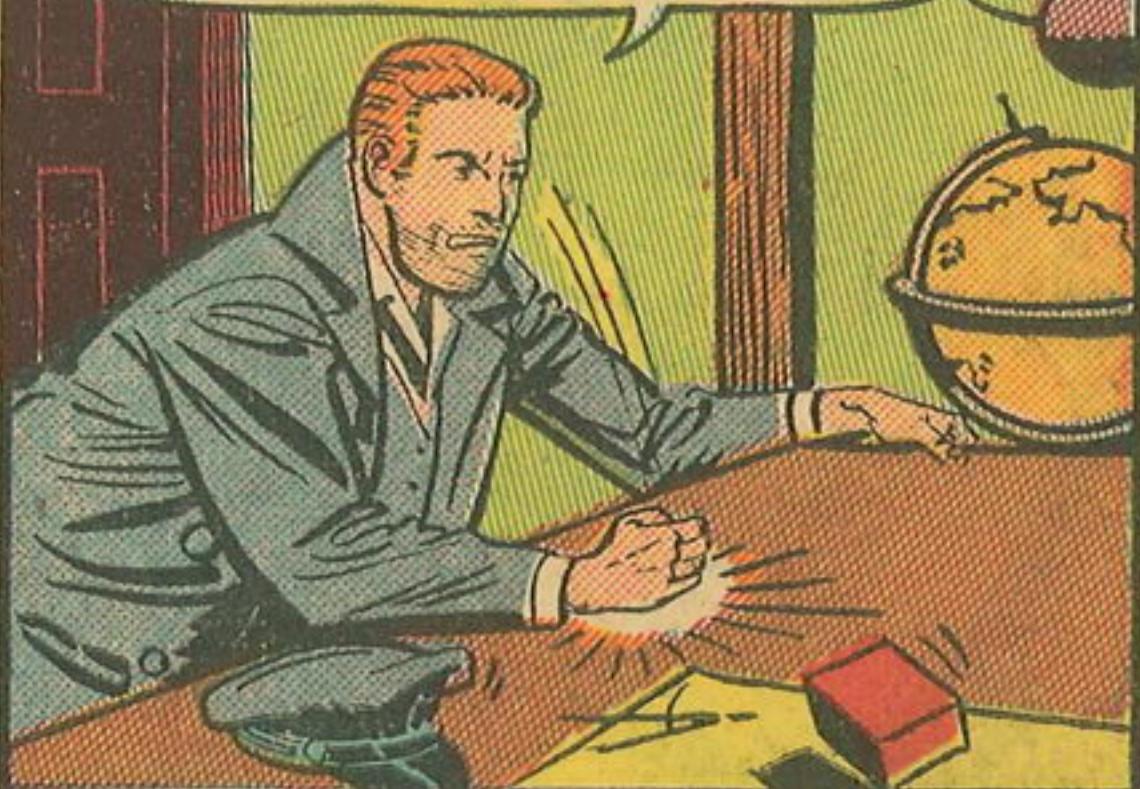
I AM NOT KNOW. EES BE MANY YEARS SINCE I AM SEE THE BUST-AMONTE FAMILY. I AM BE YOUNG BOY WHEN I RUNNING AWAY. -SIGH- EET EES NICE OF YOU TO COMING WEETH ME, TIM.

WELL, WE NEEDED A VACATION AFTER BRING-ING THOSE CATTLE ALL THE WAY TO ALTA CALIFORNIA. THIS IS IT!



AS TIM AND CHITO TALK IN THEIR CABIN, CAPTAIN "ROCKY" SHORES IS LIVID WITH RAGE...

BY THE SCARS OF SATAN'S LONG-BOAT! I'LL HAVE THE GIRL YET—AND THAT HOLT WILL BE KEEL-HAULED FROM HERE TO BOSTON!



I DIDN'T TAKE THE TROUBLE TO MEET HER IN BOSTON AN' PLAY SWEET FER NOTHIN'! HER FOLKS IS RICH—AN' I'LL GET THEIR MONEY WHEN SHE MARRIES ME LIKE SHE PROMISED ME BACK EAST!

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO SAIL MY SHIP OUT TO SEA! TO FETCH MY GIRL ABOARD! AND BY THE CATHEAD OF THE CONSTITUTION, I'LL DO IT!

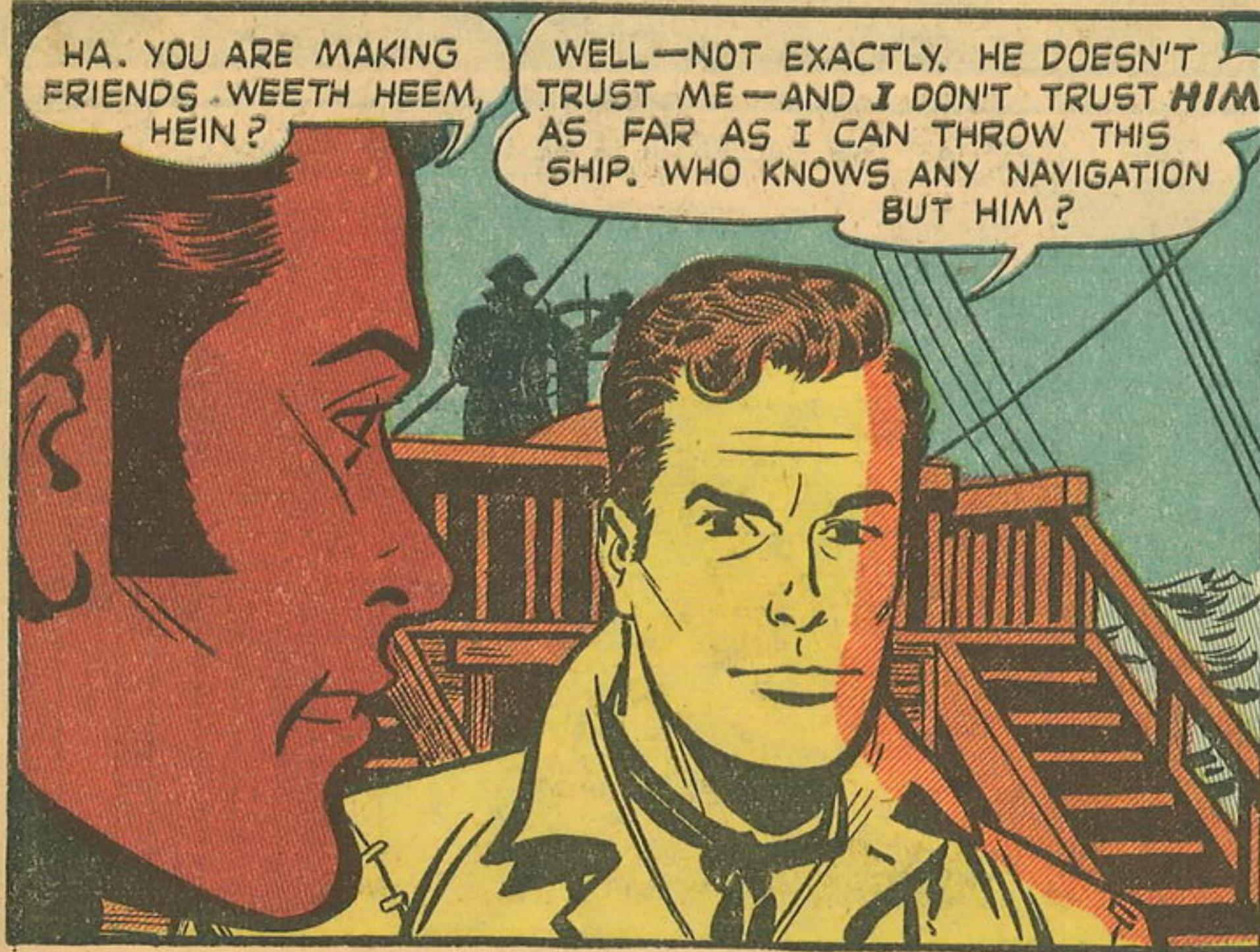


THAT NIGHT, AND FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS THEREAFTER, CAPTAIN SHORES STOOD BY THE WHEELBOX, A SPOKE OF THE GREAT WHEEL ALWAYS IN HIS HAND...



HA. YOU ARE MAKING FRIENDS WEETH HEEM, HEIN?

WELL—NOT EXACTLY. HE DOESN'T TRUST ME—AND I DON'T TRUST HIM AS FAR AS I CAN THROW THIS SHIP. WHO KNOWS ANY NAVIGATION BUT HIM?



FOR ALL WE KNOW—THE CAPTAIN COULD BE TAKING US TO CHINA!

AY DI MI!  
CHINA!



# TIM HOLT



MOVING DOWN THE SIDE OF THE SWIFTLY TRAVELLING CLIPPER SHIP, TIM MANOEUVRES HIMSELF WITHIN HEARING DISTANCE OF THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN...



MINUTES LATER, THE CABIN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES. THEN -



SHE SAID SHE'D HAVE A BAG OF HER FAMILY JEWELS. EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T, SHE'S A PRIZE WORTH CATCHING—ESPECIALLY SINCE HER FOLKS ARE PLENTY WEALTHY!



TWO NIGHTS LATER, AS THE ANCHOR CHAINS SLIP THROUGH THE HAWSEPIPE —



STROKING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE COLD WATER, TIM AND CHITO CLAMBER ASHORE...



SOME TIME LATER, AT THE HACIENDA, A FEW MILES INLAND...



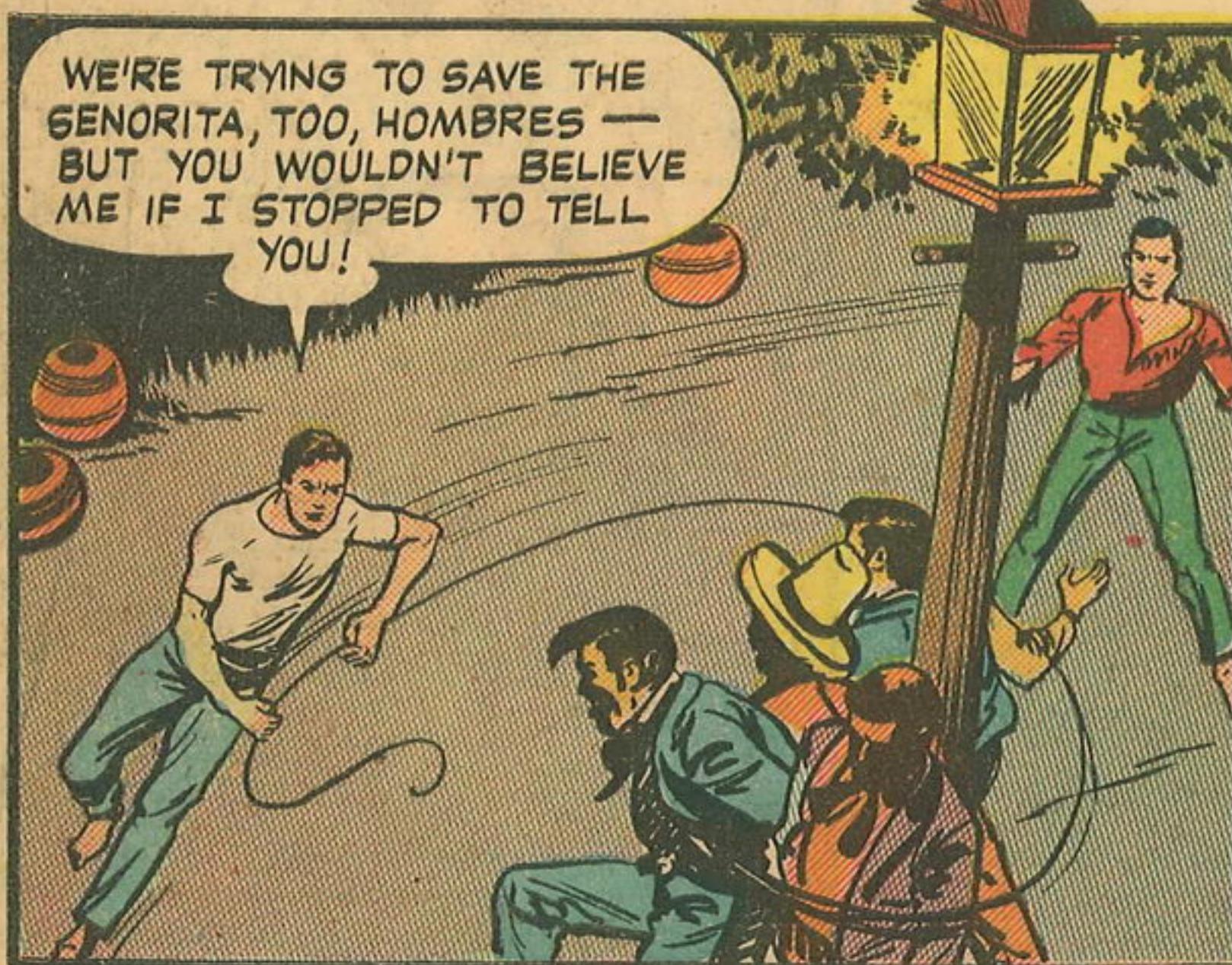
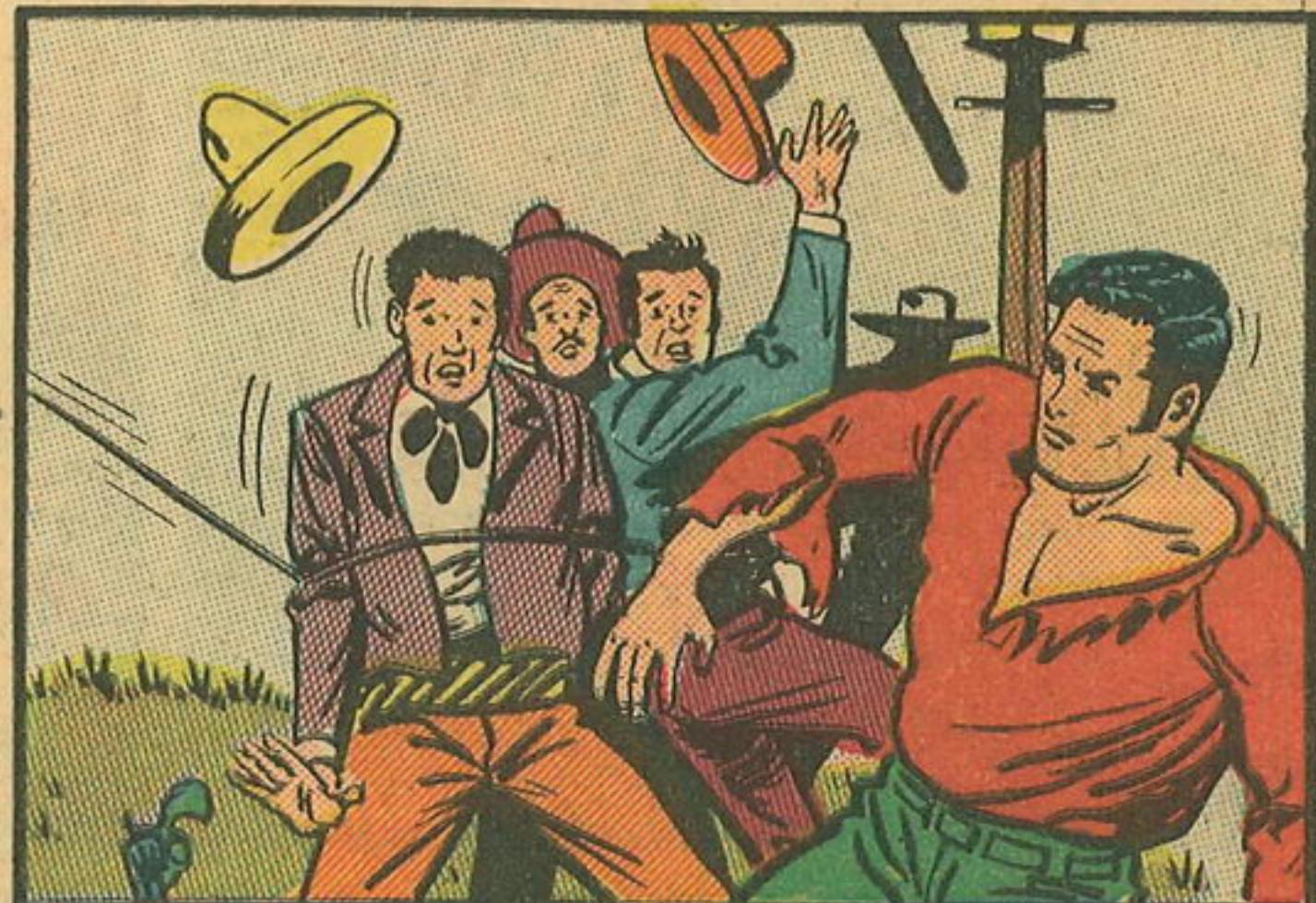
# TIM HOLT



# TIM HOLT



LIKE A LIVING THING, TIM'S LARIAT SWINGS DOWN AND CLOSES ON THE GUARDS-



# TIM HOLT

AND THEN TIM'S DESPERATE FINGERS CLOSE ON A SUBMERGED ROPE! HE PULLS CHITO TOWARD HIM...

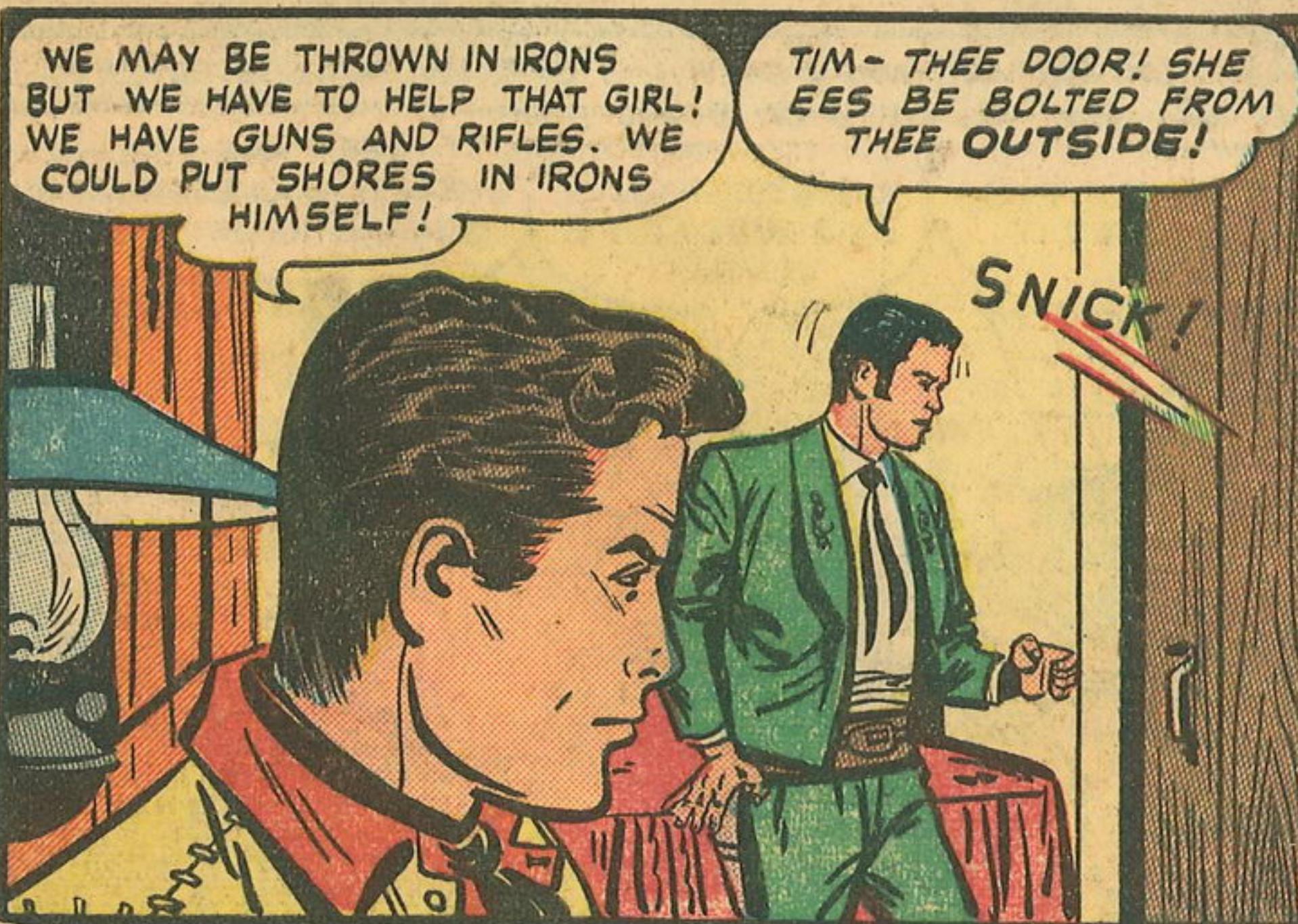
CHITO! A DRAGGING LIFT! MUST HAVE BROKEN OFF THE MAST! HANG ON!

I AM FOR TRY HANGING ON...

HAND OVER HAND, INCH BY INCH, TIM CRAWLS ALONG THE WET LIFT, DRAGGING CHITO WITH HIM. THE TUG OF THE SURGING CLIPPER ALMOST RIPS HIS ARMS FROM HIS SOCKETS...

CHITO — TAKE THE ROPE! YOU HAVE TO HELP! I'M ABOUT DONE IN!

MY ARMS SHE FEEL LIKE LEAD WEIGHTS. BUT I TRY...



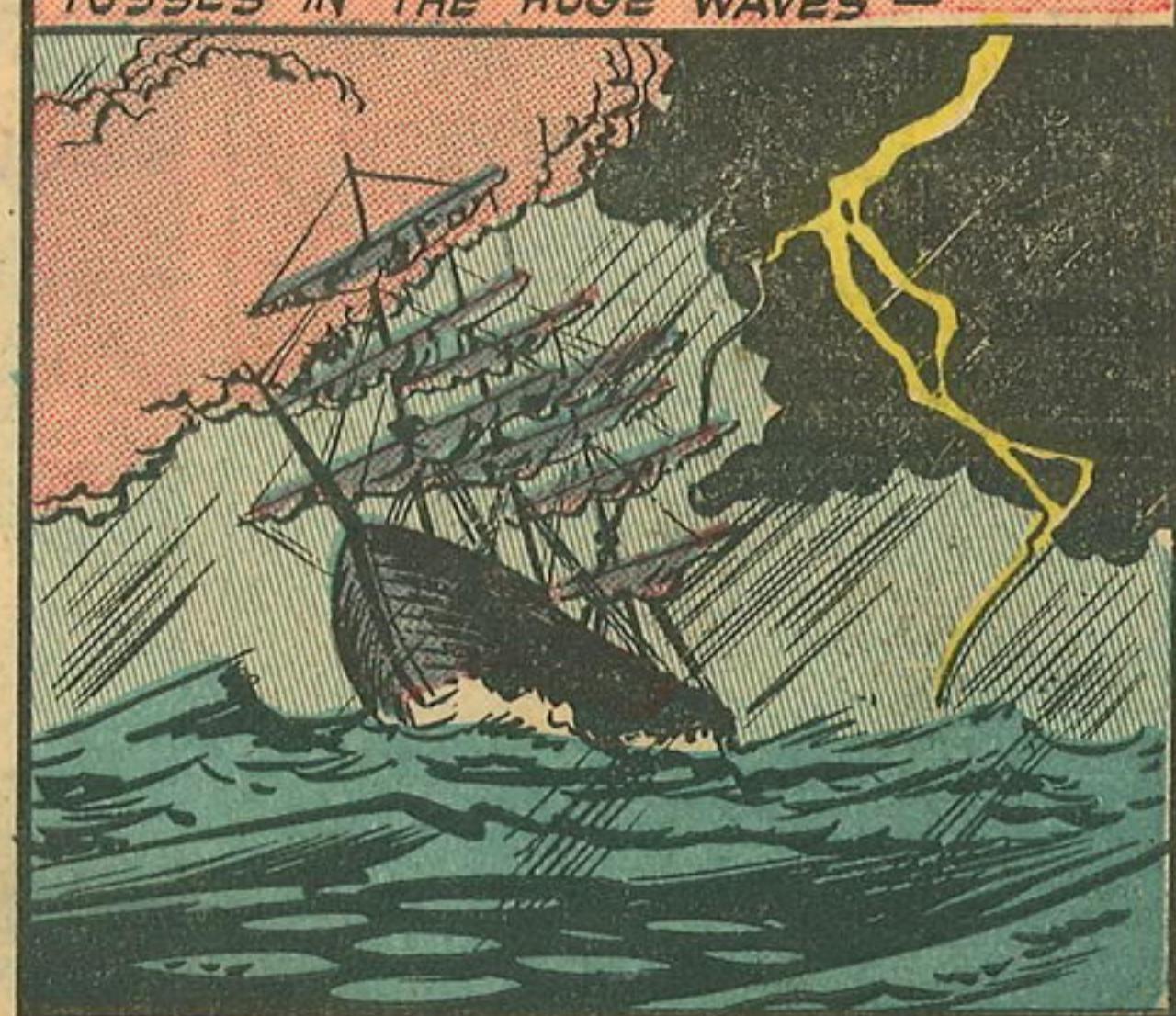
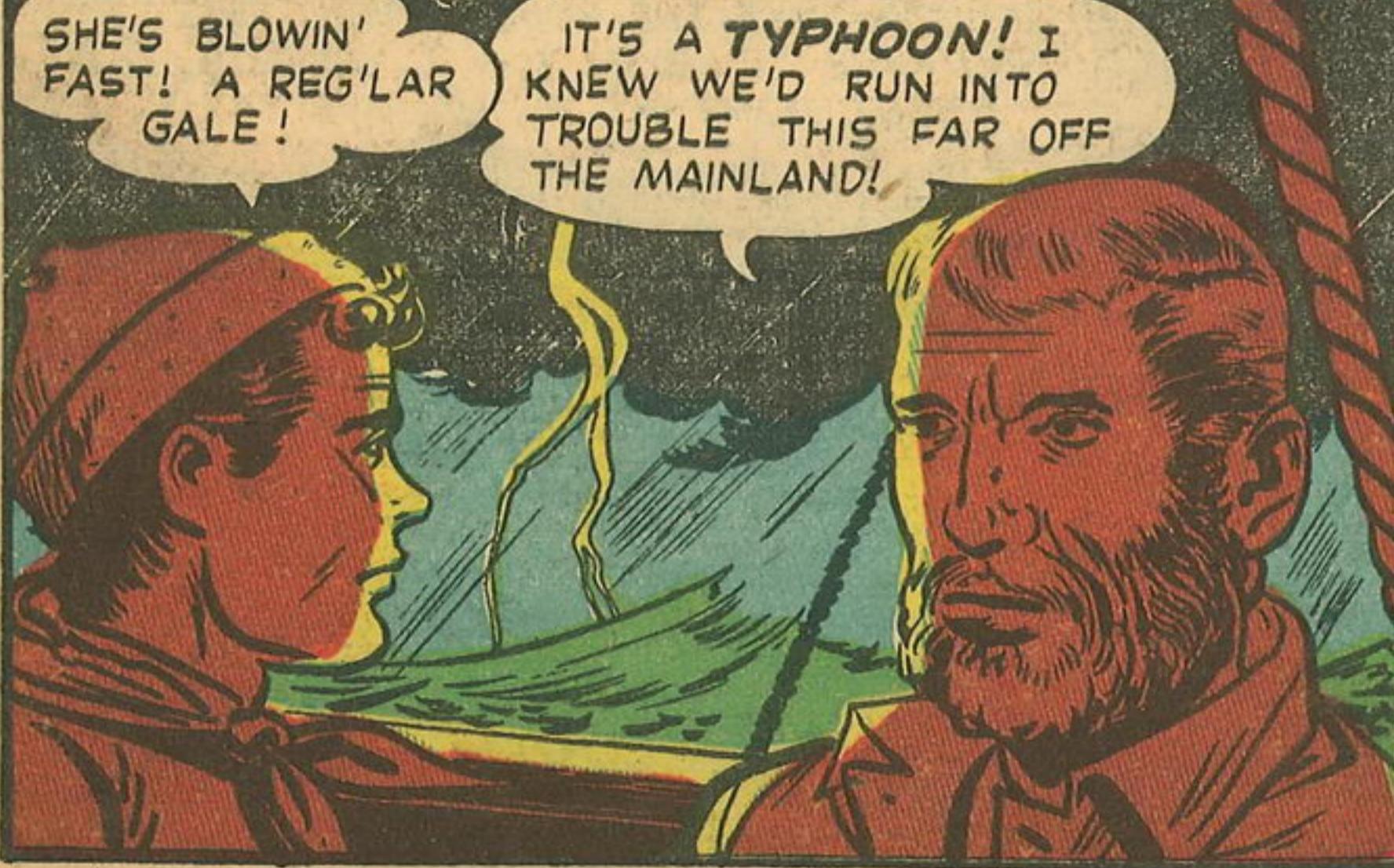
# TIM HOLT

ABOVE DECKS, GRIM EYES STARE UPWARD AS LIGHTNING SPLITS THE DARKENED SKY! A HOT WIND MOVES ACROSS THE SUDDENLY HEAVING WAVES! TENSE FACES WHITEN IN FEAR.

SHE'S BLOWIN' FAST! A REG'LAR GALE!

IT'S A TYPHOON! I KNEW WE'D RUN INTO TROUBLE THIS FAR OFF THE MAINLAND!

SECONDS LATER, THE WIND AND THE RAIN STRIKE THE CLIPPER LIKE GIGANTIC FISTS. THE VESSEL PITCHES AND TOSSES IN THE HUGE WAVES —



AY DI MI!  
EET EES ALMOST CAVE EEN MY CHEST! CLOSE THEE PORTHOLE,  
TIM!

NO, CHITO!  
I'VE AN IDEA — !

I'LL WEAKEN THE HINGES WITH THESE BULLETS.  
THEN, ON THE NEXT ROLL OF THE SHIP, THE FORCE OF THOSE WAVES SHOULD SMASH OPEN THE DOOR...!



LOOK! THE RUDDER'S GONE!  
IF IT ISN'T FIXED — THE SHIP WILL BE CAUGHT IN THE TROUGH OF THE WAVES — ROLLED OVER!  
WE'LL ALL BE LOST!

THE CAP-TAIN!  
HE CAN FEEX IT!



AT THAT INSTANT, WHEN ONLY THE CAPTAIN CAN GIVE ORDERS THAT WILL SAVE ALL LIVES ON BOARD SHIP —

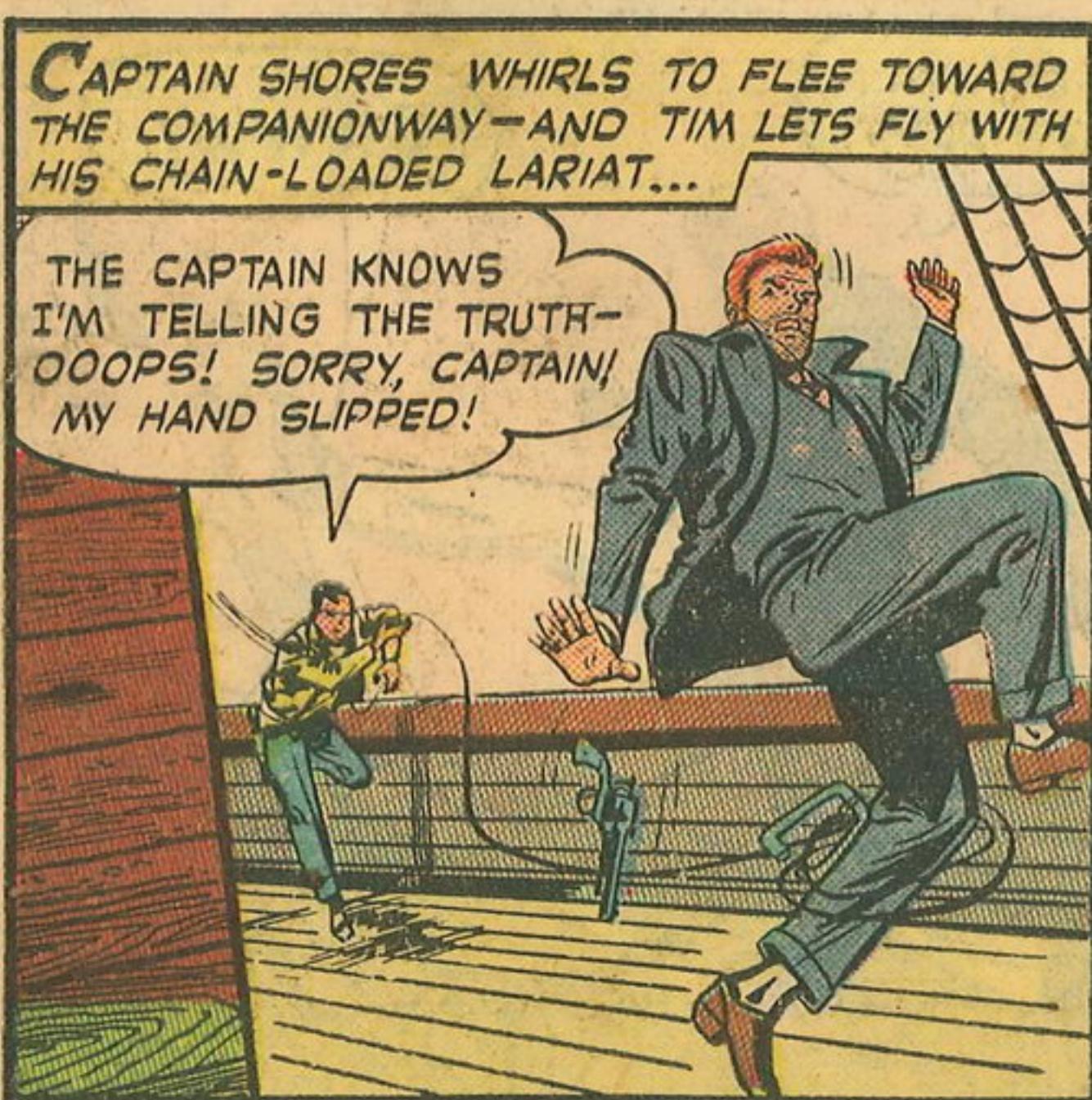
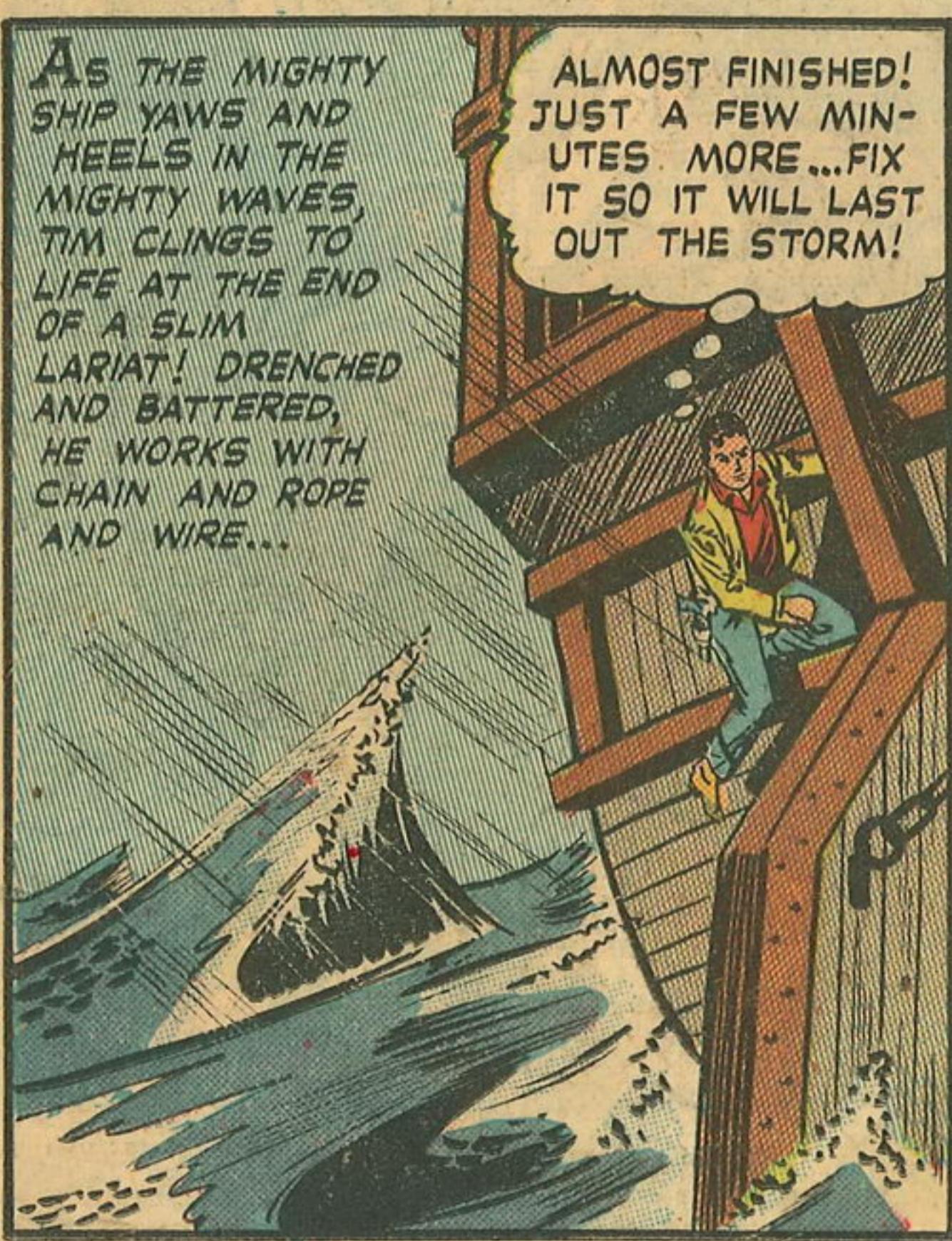
YOU WANTED THIS,  
CAP'N — HERE IT IS!

THE STORM YOU SAID WOULDN'T COME!

THEY ARE KEELING HEEM! CHOOKEENG HEEM!  
BEATING HEEM TO DEATH!

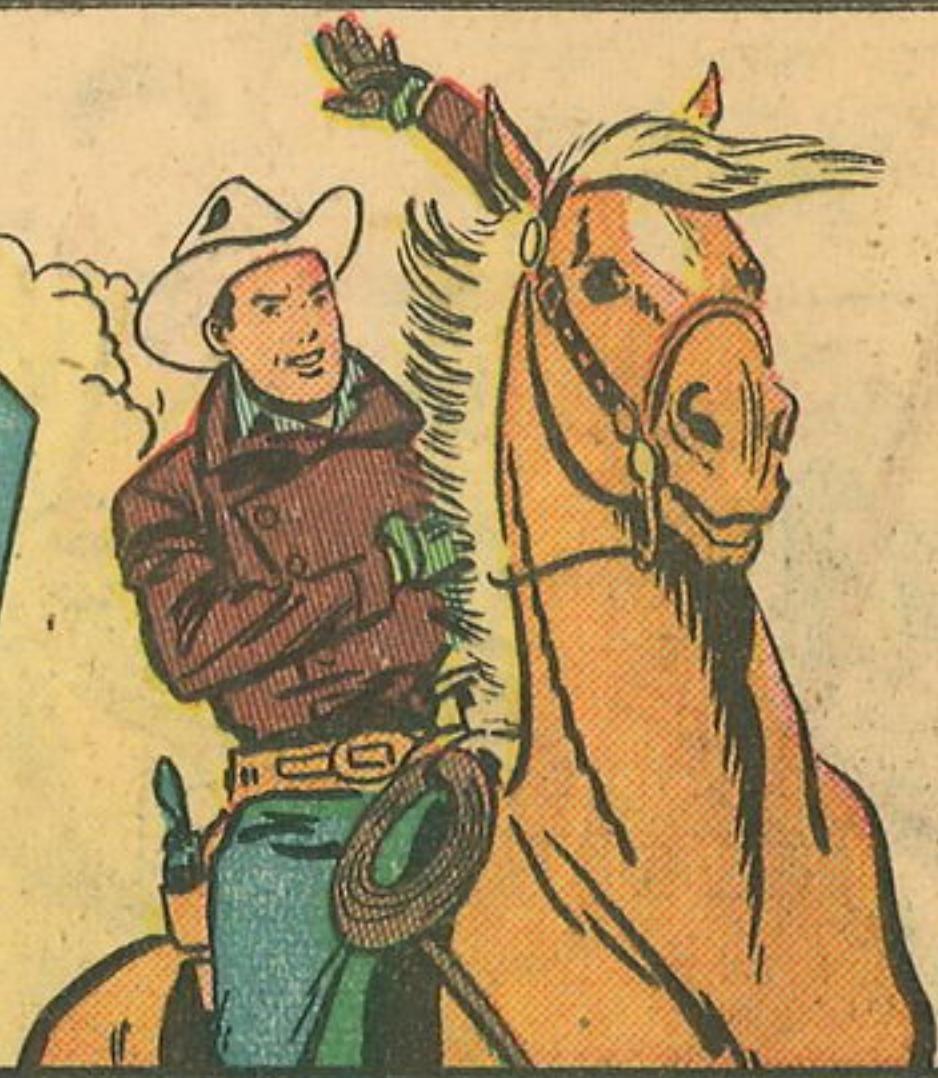


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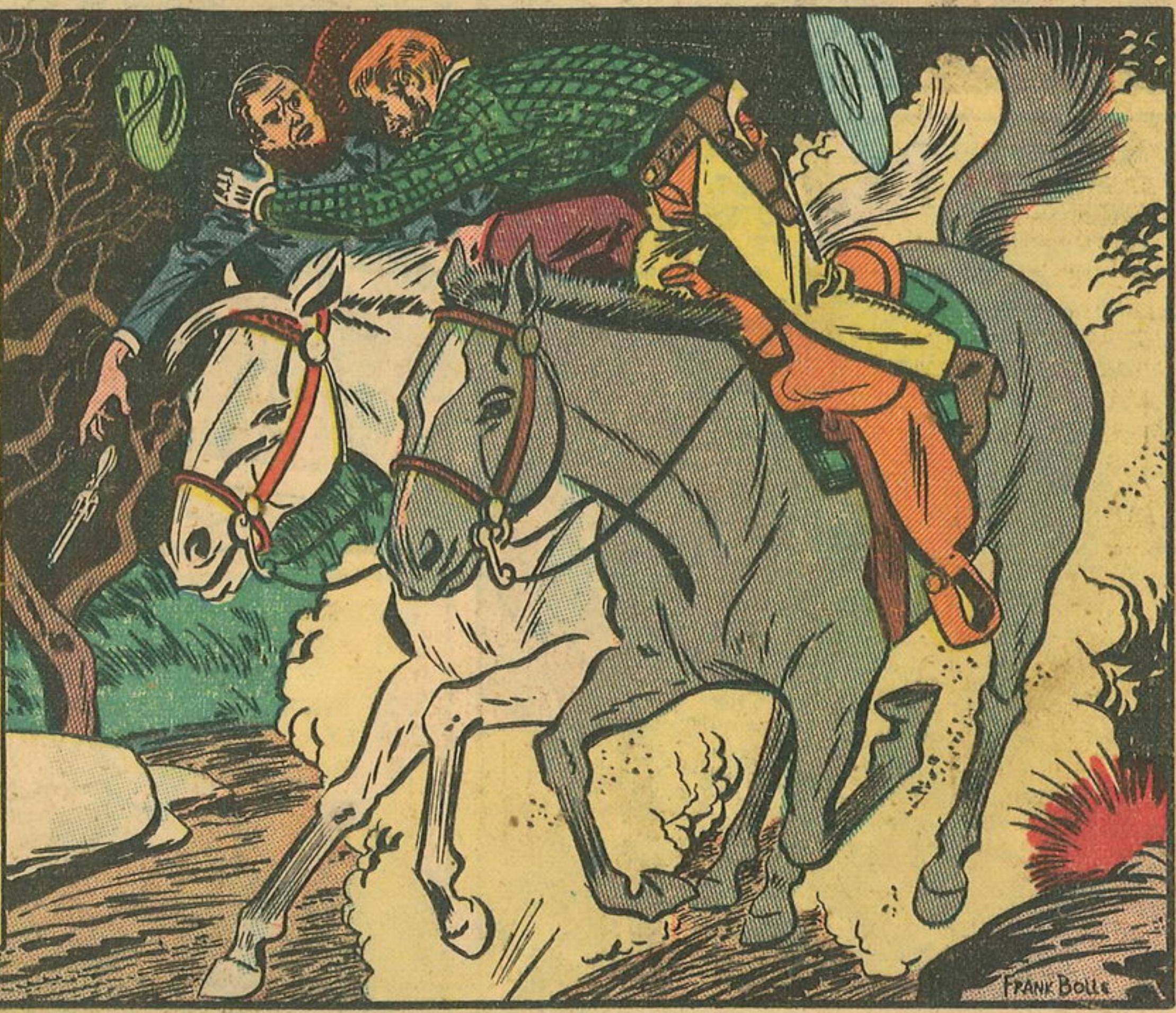


TIM HOLT

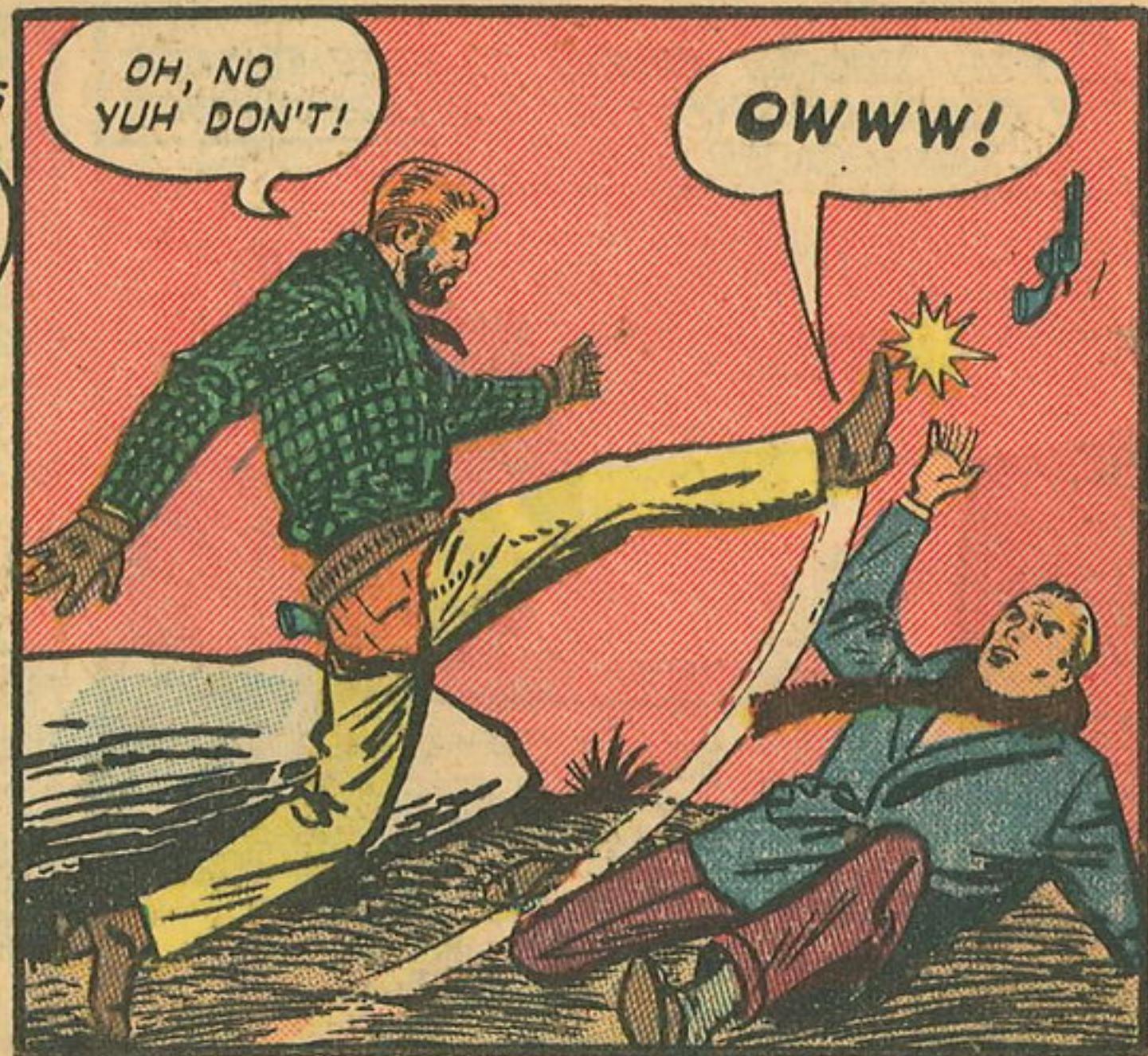
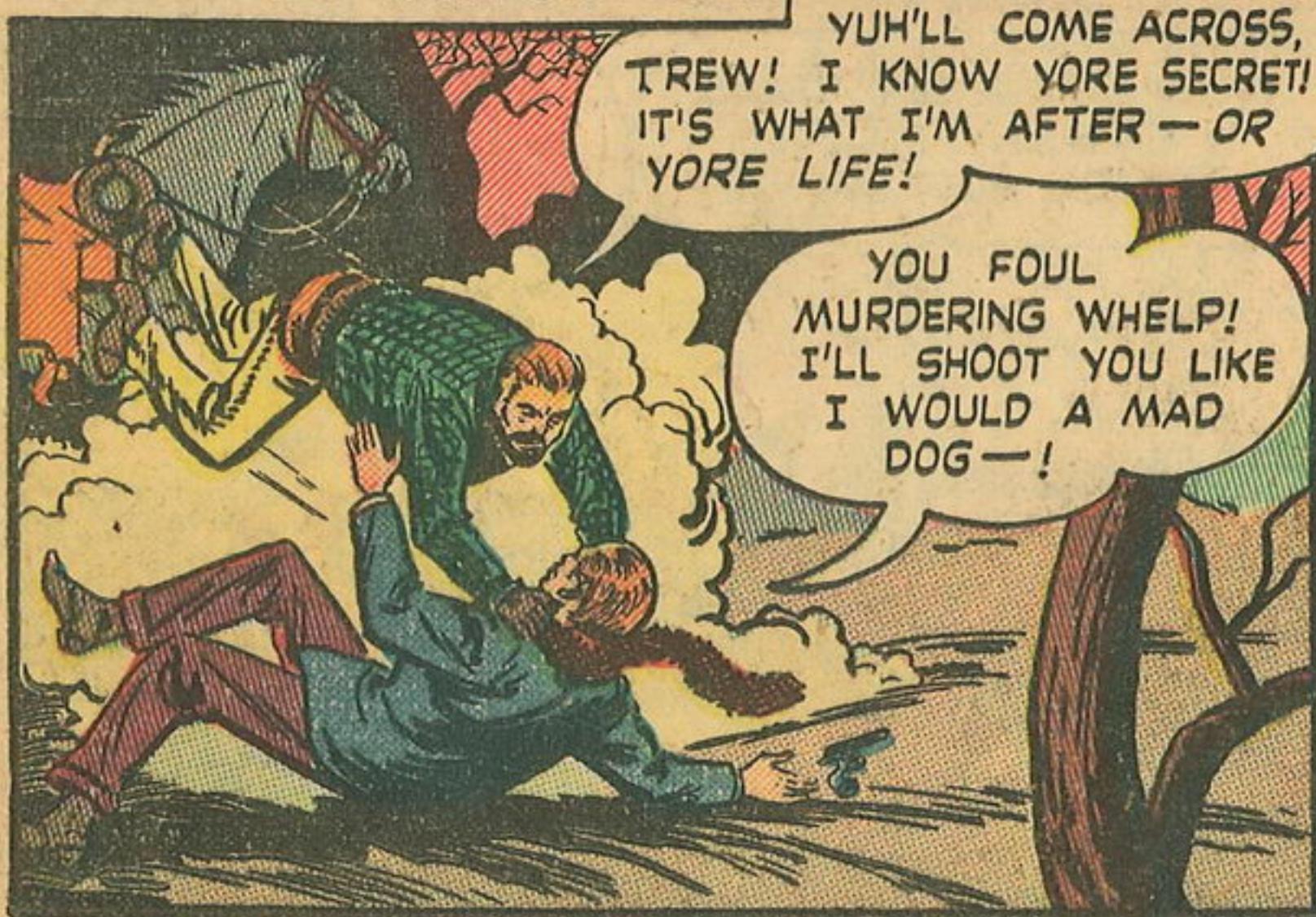
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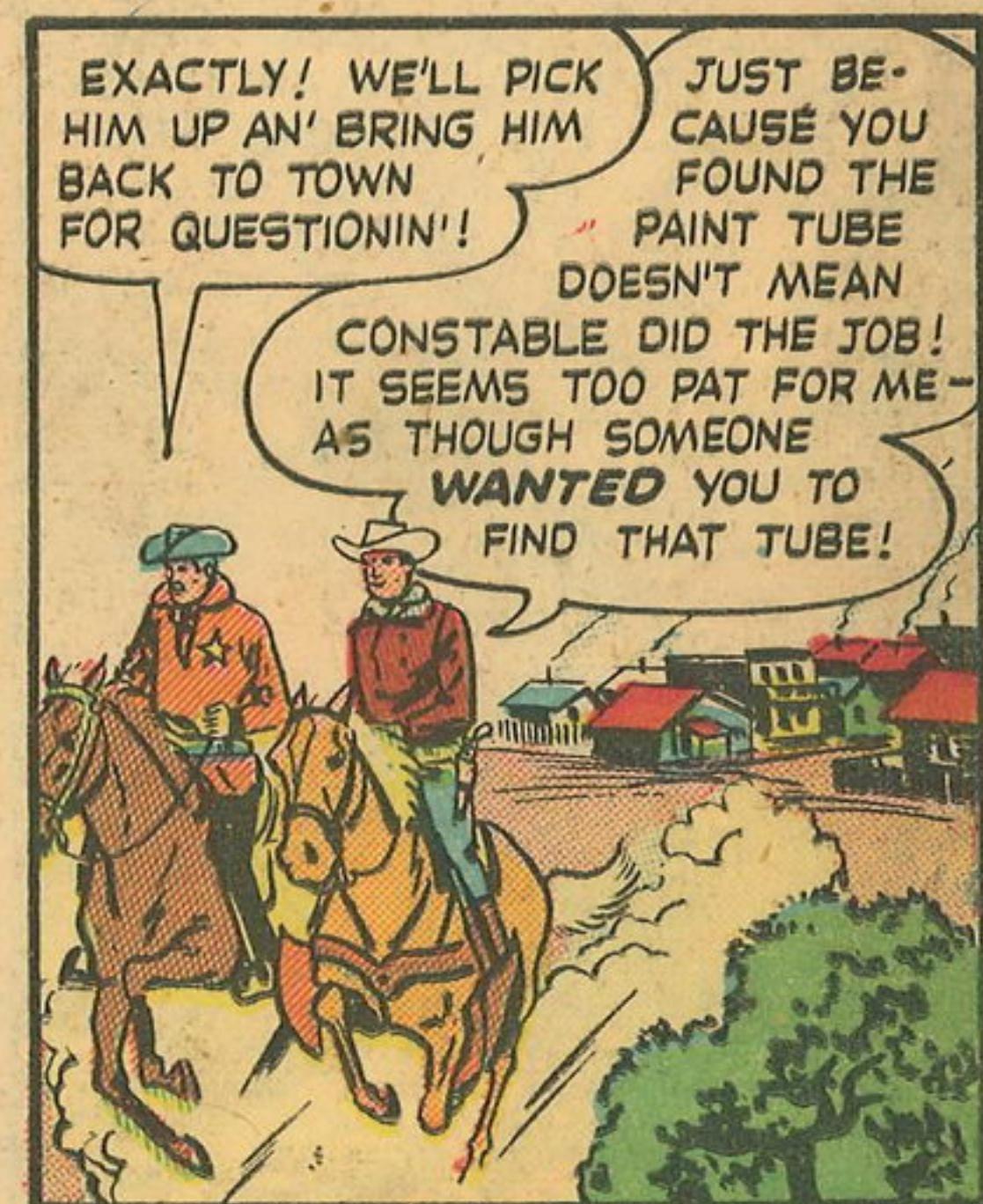
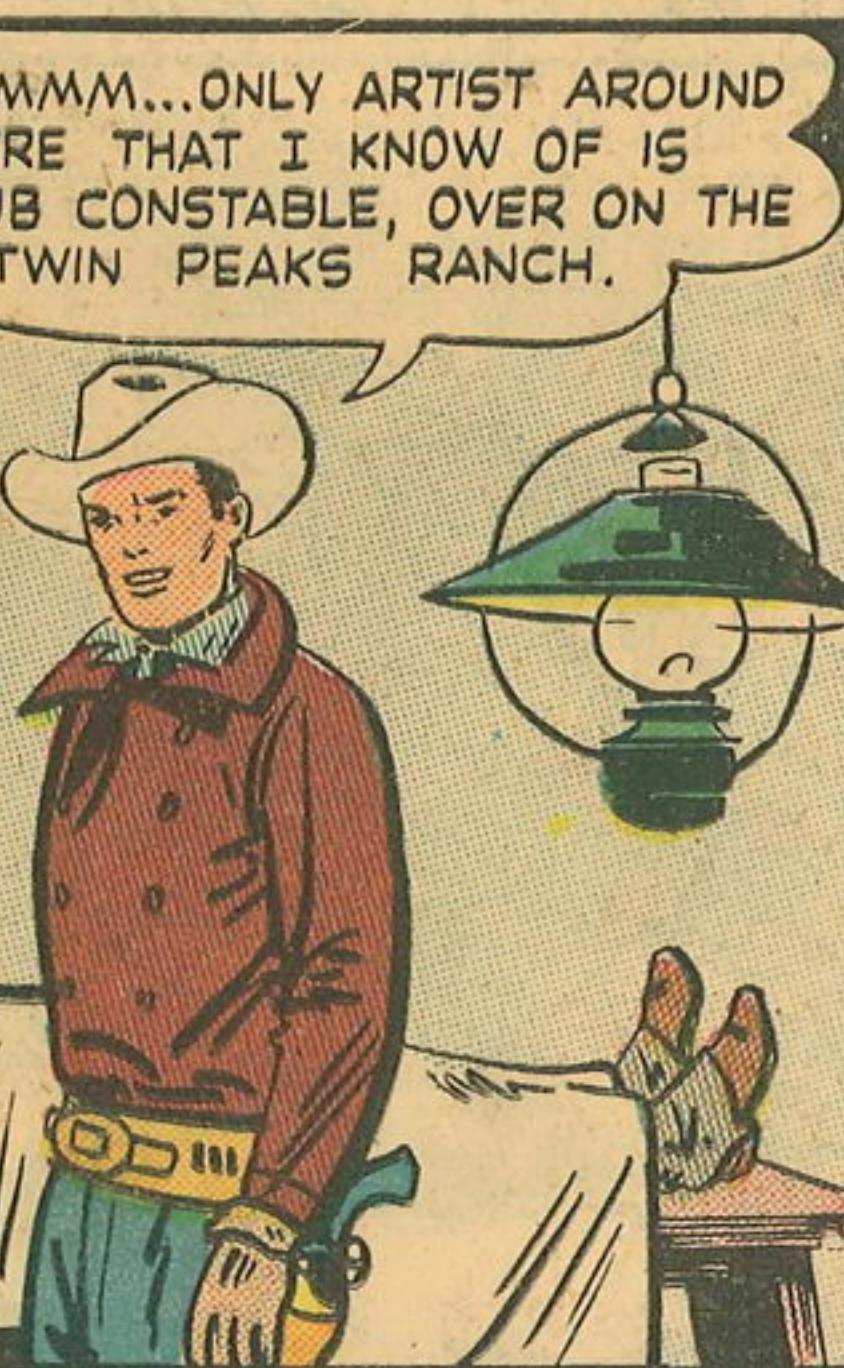
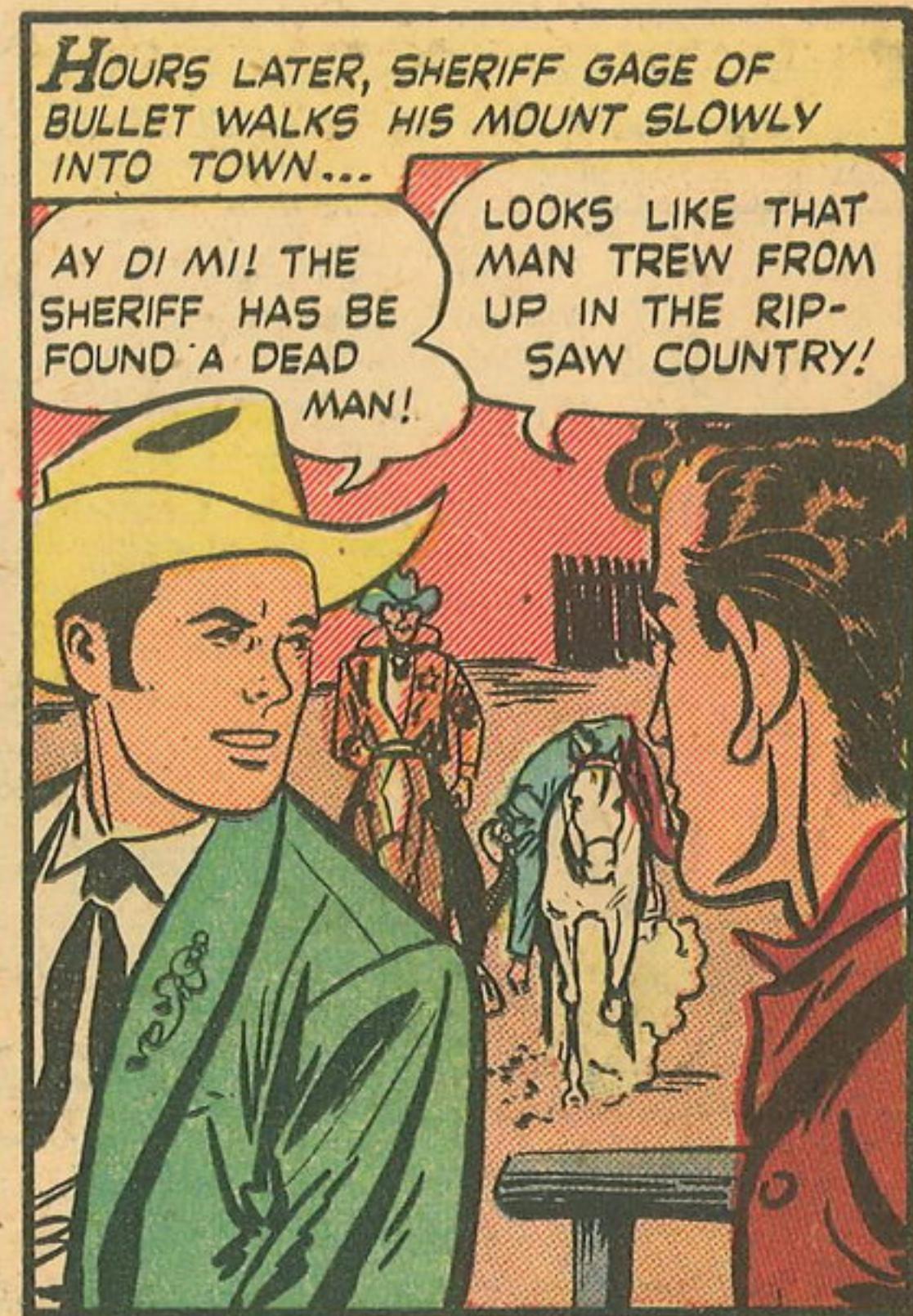
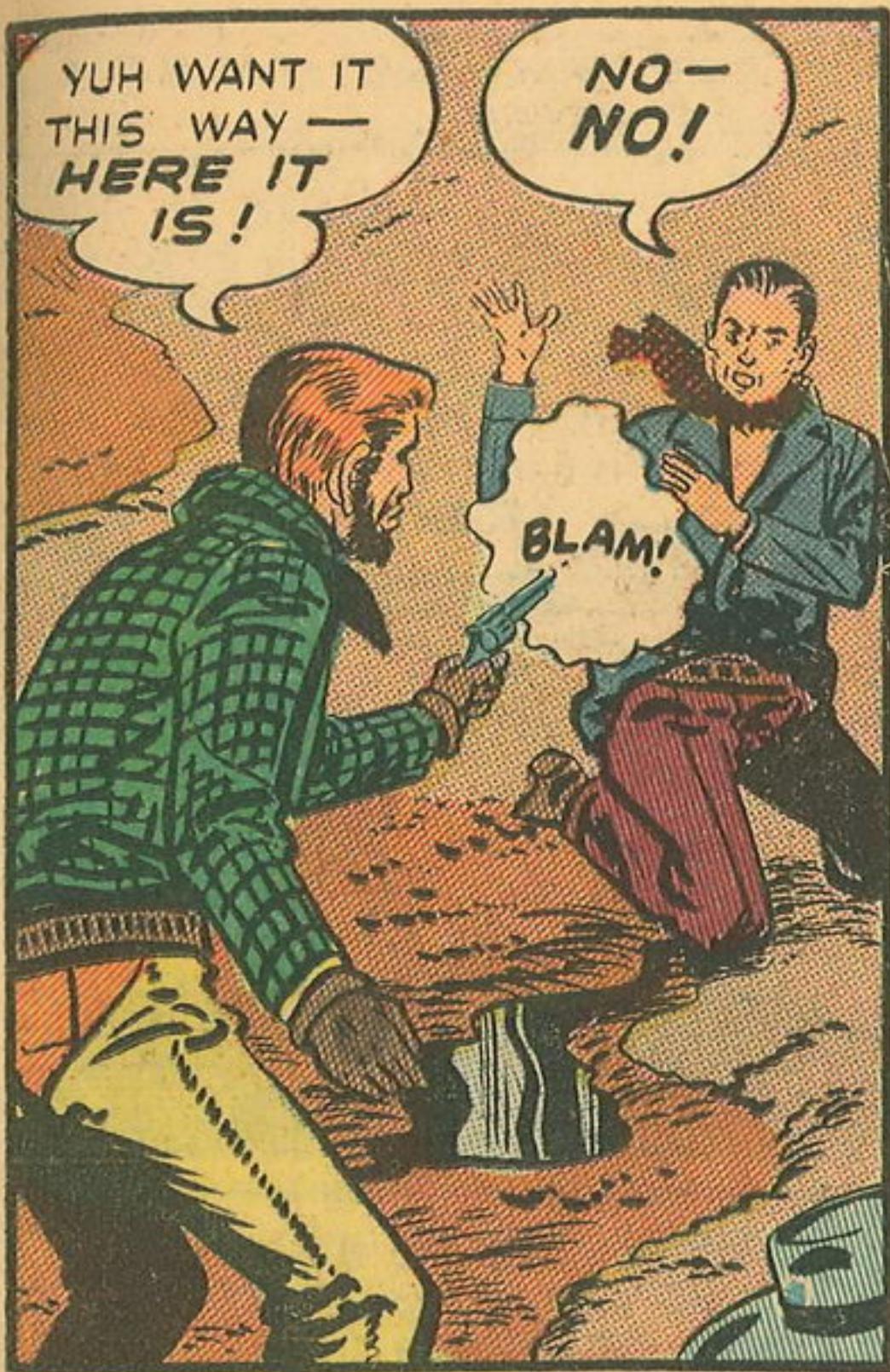
JIM TREW WAS A RANCHER NEW TO BULLET BASIN. THERE WAS NO REASON TO KILL HIM — THAT ANYONE KNEW. BUT WHEN ROD BUFORD THREW DOWN ON HIM WHEN HE FOUND TREW ALONE ON THE TRAIL, HE SET IN MOTION A DEADLY SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT WAS TO DRIVE HUB CONSTABLE FROM HIS HOME, AND SEND TIM HOLT RACING AFTER "THE PAINTED KILLER!"



TWO MEN REEL AND STRUGGLE ON THE TRAIL TO BULLET. A MUFFLED SHOUT — A SNARL — AND TWO FORMS TOPPLE FROM THEIR SADDLES...

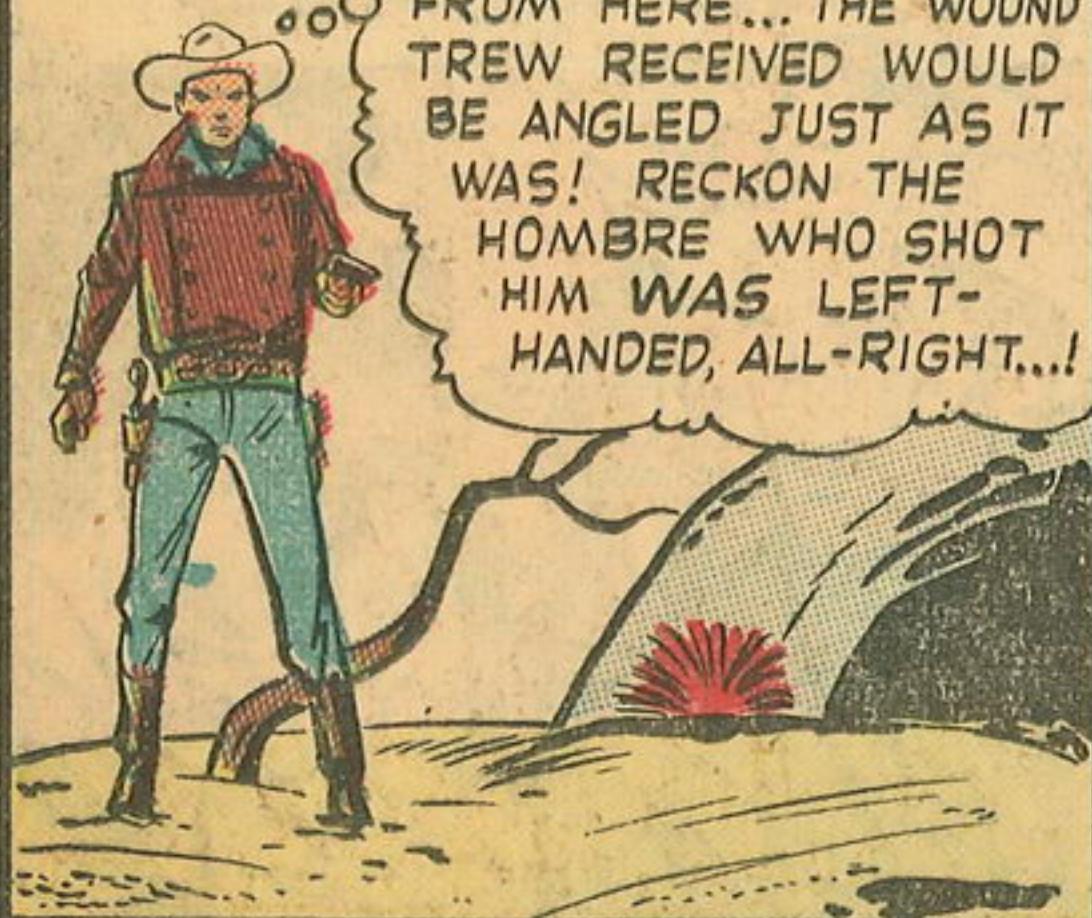


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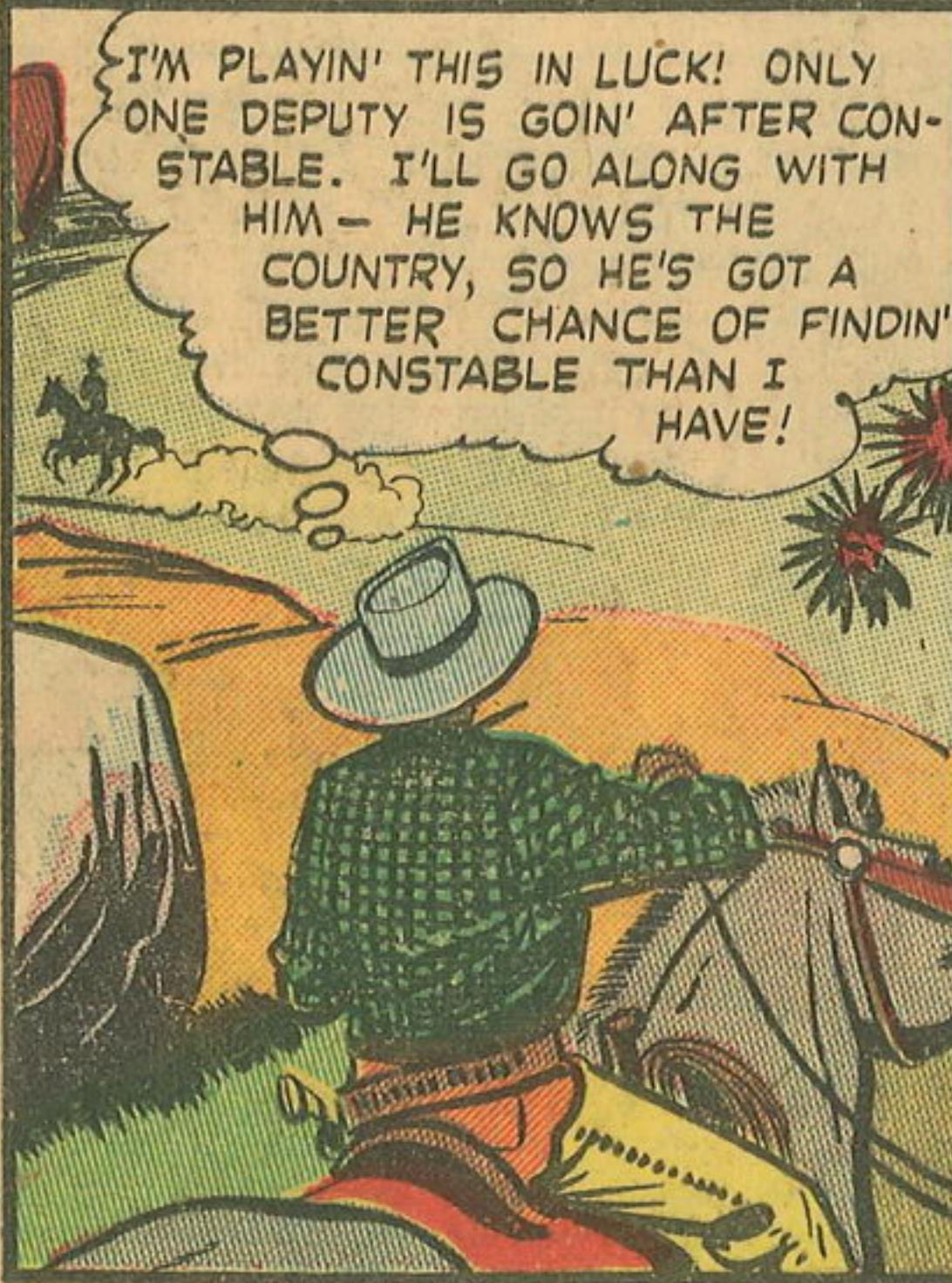


# TIM HOLT

CAREFULLY PLANTING HIMSELF IN THE KILLER'S BOOT MARKS, TIM HOLDS HIS GUN IN HIS LEFT HAND...



TIM RIDES ON, UNAWARE THAT HE HIMSELF IS BEING FOLLOWED BY A THIN-LIPPED KILLER...

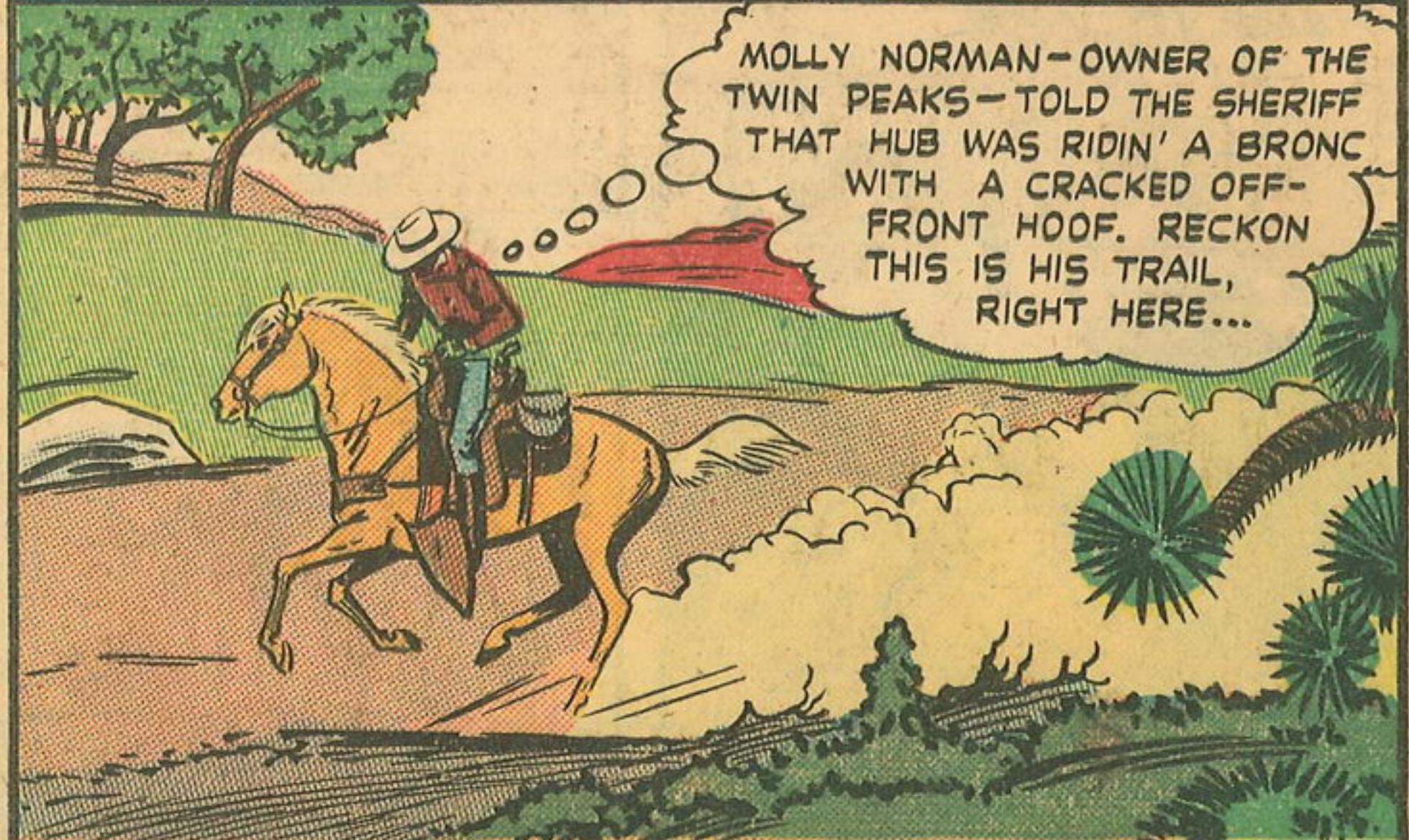


I GOT TO SHOOT ME AN ANTELOPE — JERKY THE MEAT — PACK IT ON MY SADDLER. THEN I —

WHAT'S THAT?



A FEW MILES ABOVE THE TWIN PEAKS RANCH YARD, TIM PICKS UP THE TRACKS OF HUB CONSTABLE'S HORSE...



HIGH IN THE TIMBER BELT, YOUNG HUB CONSTABLE IS TAUT WITH FEAR. HIS SHAKING HANDS LIFT A RIFLE AGAIN AND AGAIN...



THAT HOMBRE HAS BEEN SHOOTIN' AT ME FOR THE LAST THREE, FOUR DAYS, EVER SINCE I WENT PAINTIN' UP IN THE RIPSAWS! I CAN'T TAKE NO MORE! I'M RIDIN' OUT OF THIS RANGE... SOON'S I GET SOME FOOD...



HIS NERVES MADE RAW BY NIGHTS OF SLEEPLESSNESS AND DAYS WHEN ANY MOMENT MIGHT BRING A DEATH-DEALING BULLET, HUB WHIRLS. HIS FINGER TIGHTENS ON HIS RIFLE TRIGGER...



# TIM HOLT

WHA-WHAT DID I DO! I DIDN'T MEAN TO SHOOT YOU, TIM! NOW-NOW I'M A KI-KILLER TOO!

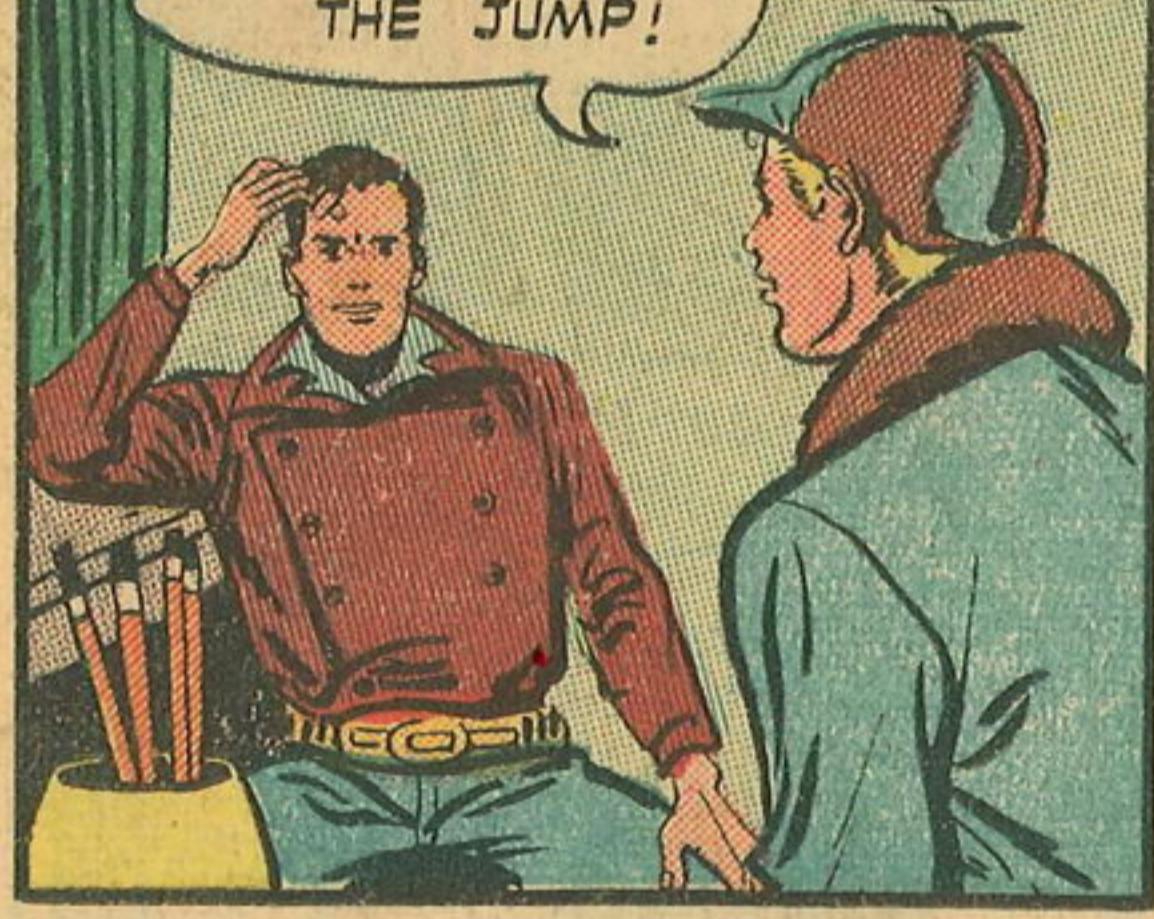


LEADEN SECONDS LATER, TIM GROANS... OPENS HIS EYES. HUB EAGERLY LIFTS HIM TO A SITTING POSITION...

I DIDN'T MEAN TO DRILL YEH, TIM! IT WAS THET OTHER FELLER...

LUCKY FOR ME YOUR HANDS WERE SHAKING, HUB! AS IT IS, THE BULLET PARTED MY HAIR IN THE MIDDLE... BUT ONLY KNOCKED ME OUT!

I WAS PAINTIN' UP IN THE RIPSAW, TIM. FIRST THING I KNEW SOME HOMBRE STARTED POT-SHOOTIN' AT ME. I HIGHTAILED IT, QUICK. EVER SINCE, THE SAME HOMBRE HAS BEEN FANNIN' MY FACE WITH LEAD. SO I TOOK IT ON THE JUMP!



THIS IS THE PICTURE YOU WERE WORKING ON SHORTLY BEFORE HE BEGAN SHOOTING AT YOU? I DON'T SEE ANYTHING ODD ABOUT THIS—EXCEPT YOUR PUTTING IN THOSE TWO MEN THERE...

THEY WERE STANDING THERE JUST AS I HAVE 'EM THERE ON THE CANVAS, TIM! ONE WAS WATCHING THE OTHER DIGGIN'. I THOUGHT THEY'D HELP GIVE PERSPECTIVE TO THE PAINTING...

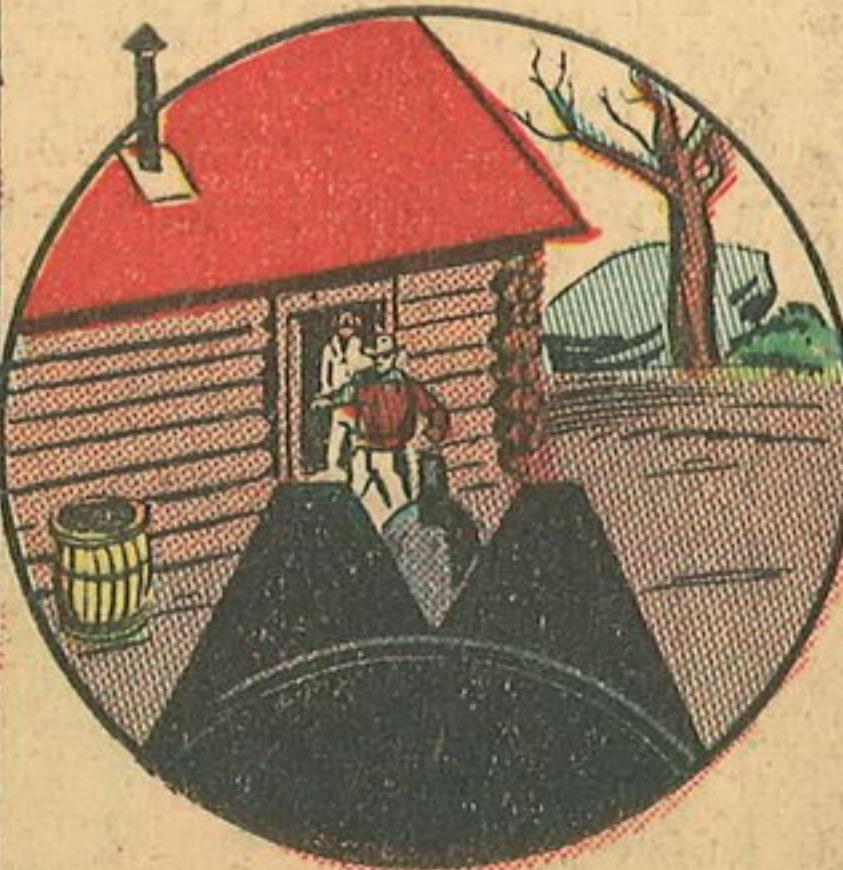
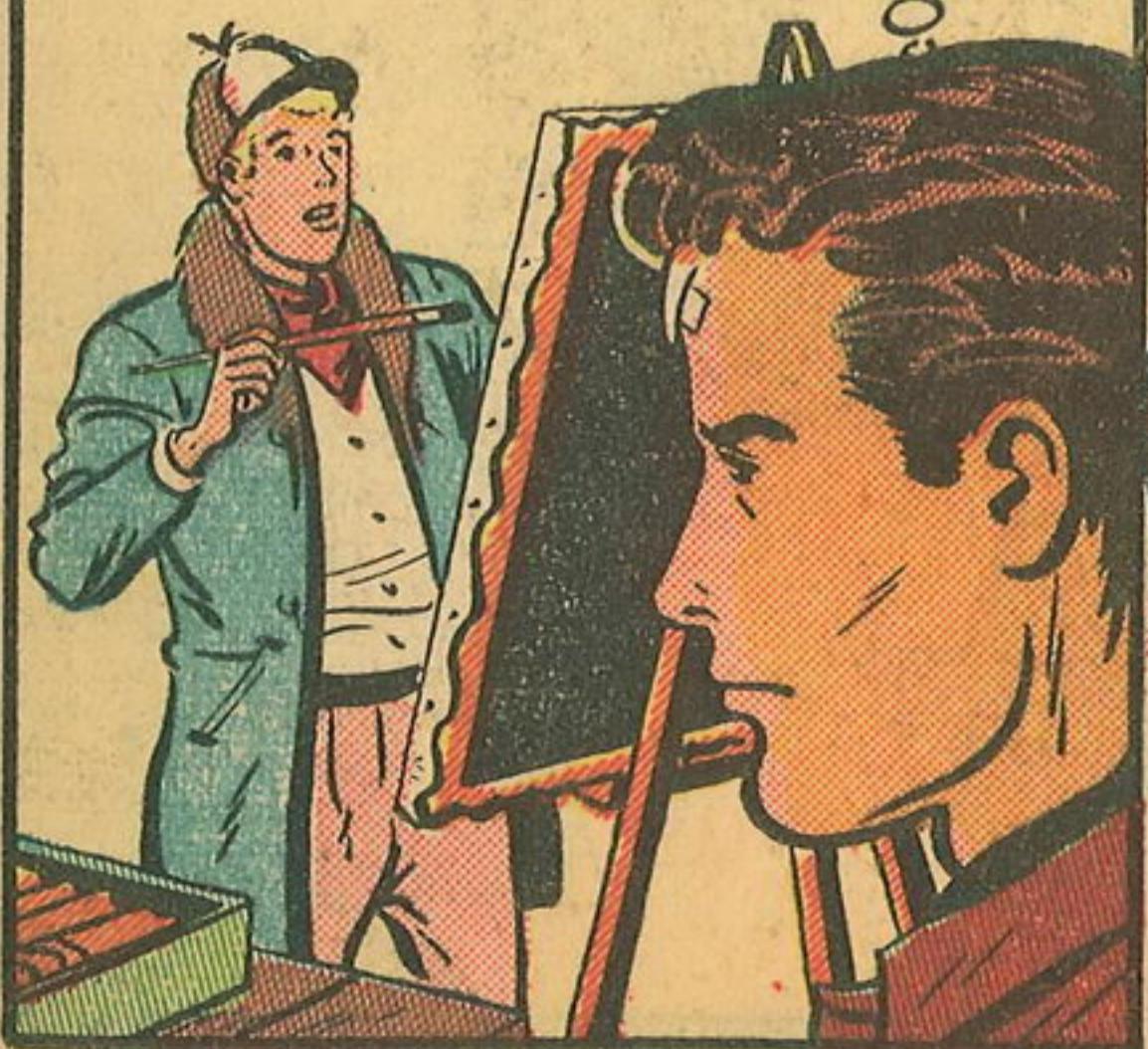
AS TIM LEAVES THE CABIN, HE IS WATCHED ACROSS THE VEE SIGHTS OF A RIFLE SOME TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY...

STAY HERE FOR A FEW DAYS, HUB. I'LL FIND A WAY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU. I FEEL YOU'RE INNOCENT, BUT I HAVE TO PRODUCE THE GUILTY MAN TO SATISFY THE SHERIFF...

SURE, TIM—AND THANKS A LOT!

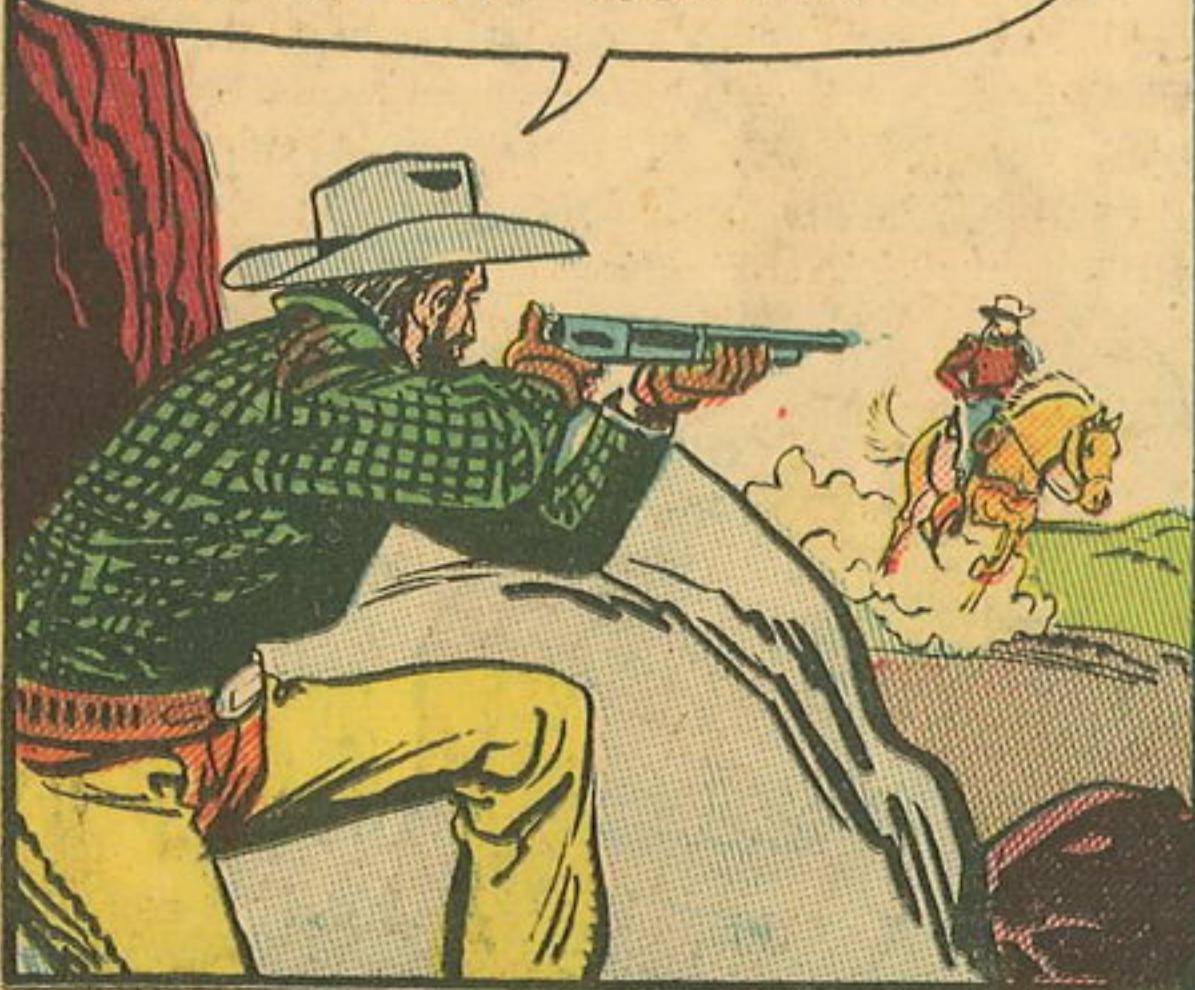
I'LL JUST TOUCH THIS UP A BIT IF YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT. THERE...

HUB IS RIGHT-HANDED! I RECKON HE'S INNOCENT! BUT SHERIFF GAGE WOULD THROW HIM IN JAIL WITHOUT MORE PROOF THAN THAT!

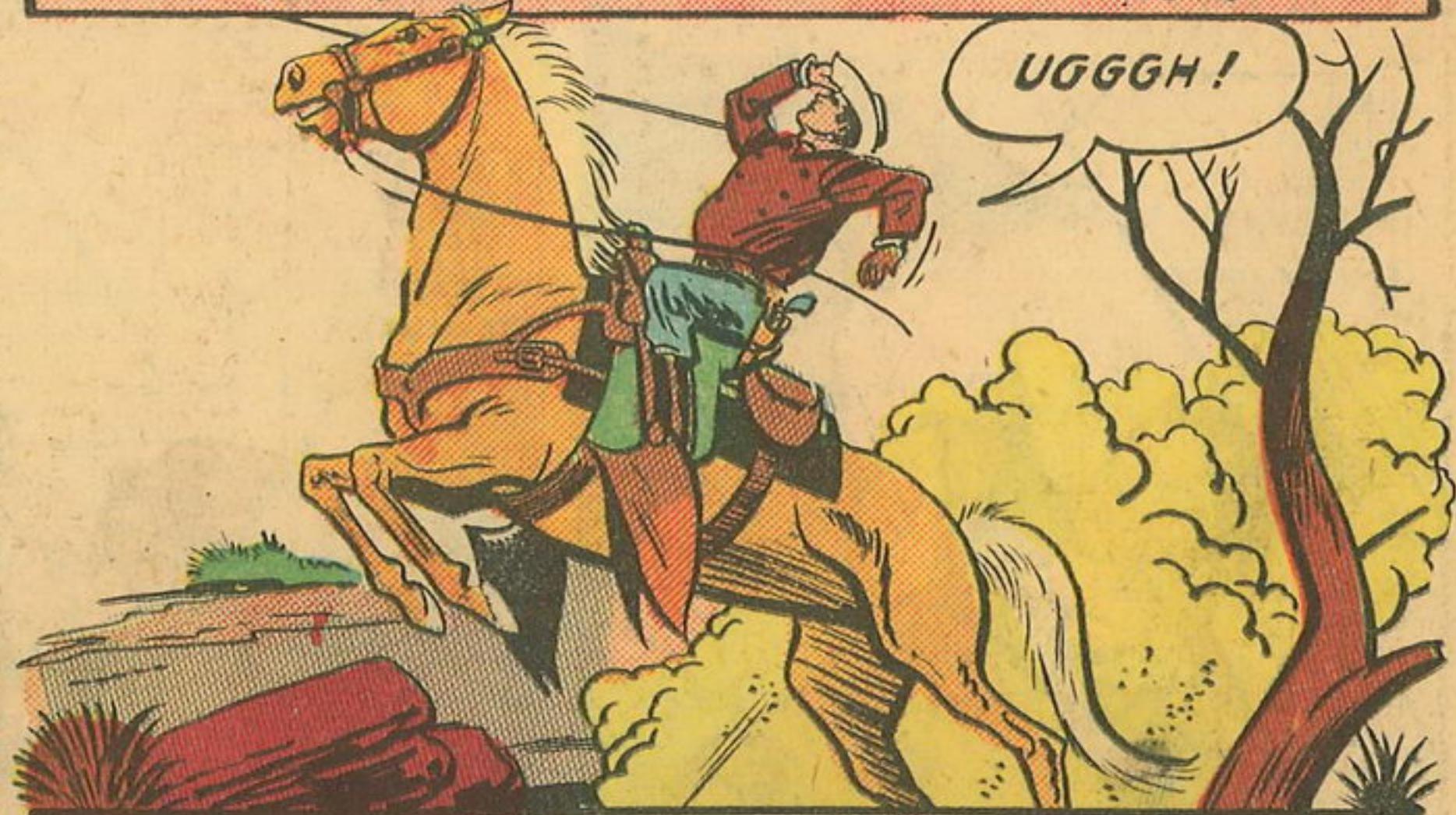


# TIM HOLT

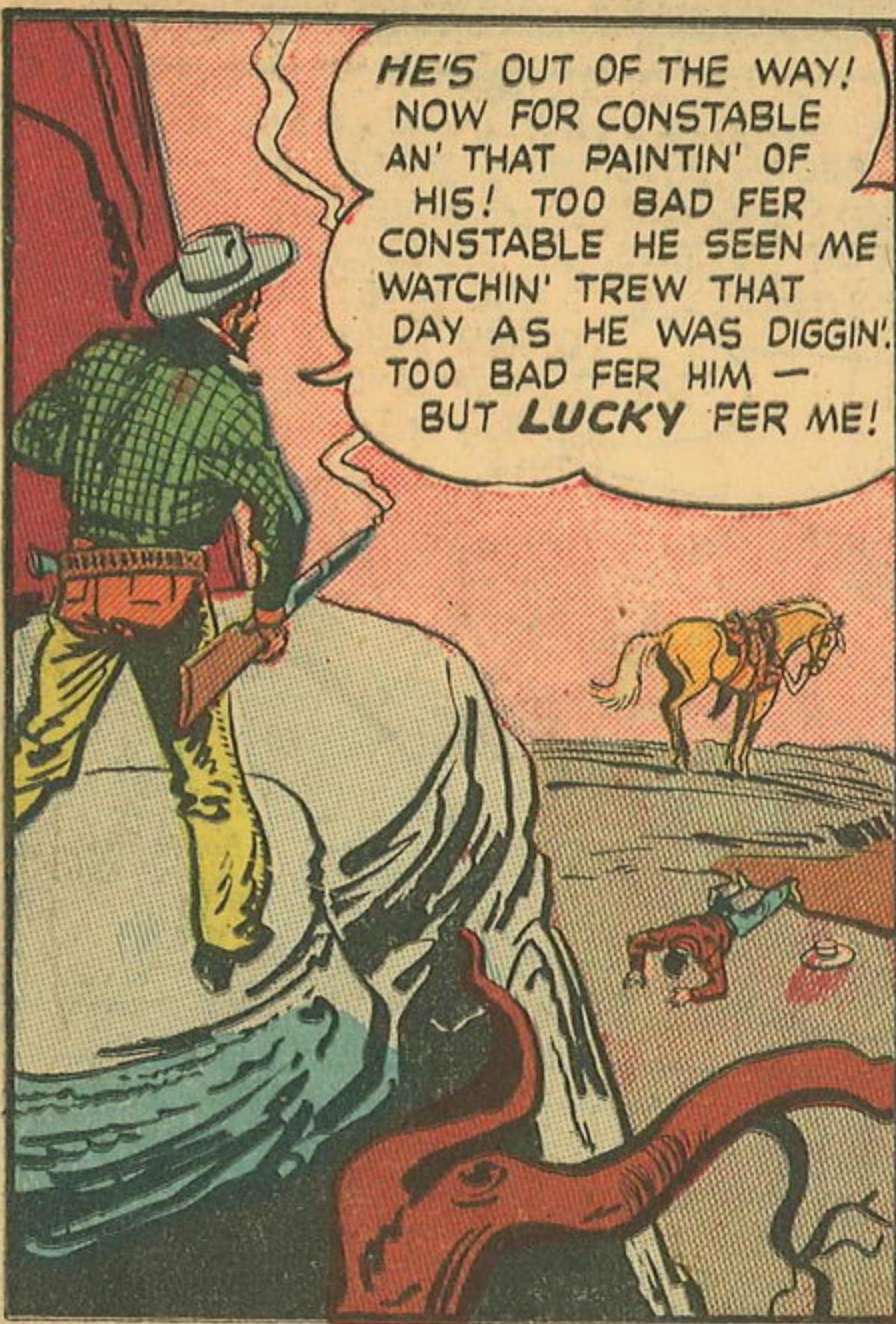
I FIGGERED THE DEPUTY'D BRING CONSTABLE IN WITH HIM - BUT I CAN GET RID OF 'EM SEPARATE JUST AS EASY AS BOTH TOGETHER!



THE PAIN OF HIS WOUNDED HEAD THROBS AND POUNDS! TIM LIFTS A HAND TO EASE THE PRESSURE OF HIS HAT - JUST AS A RIFLE BOLT SNICKS AND A WINCHESTER THUNDERS!!!



HE'S OUT OF THE WAY! NOW FOR CONSTABLE AN' THAT PAINTIN' OF HIS! TOO BAD FER CONSTABLE HE SEEN ME WATCHIN' TREW THAT DAY AS HE WAS DIGGIN'. TOO BAD FER HIM - BUT LUCKY FER ME!



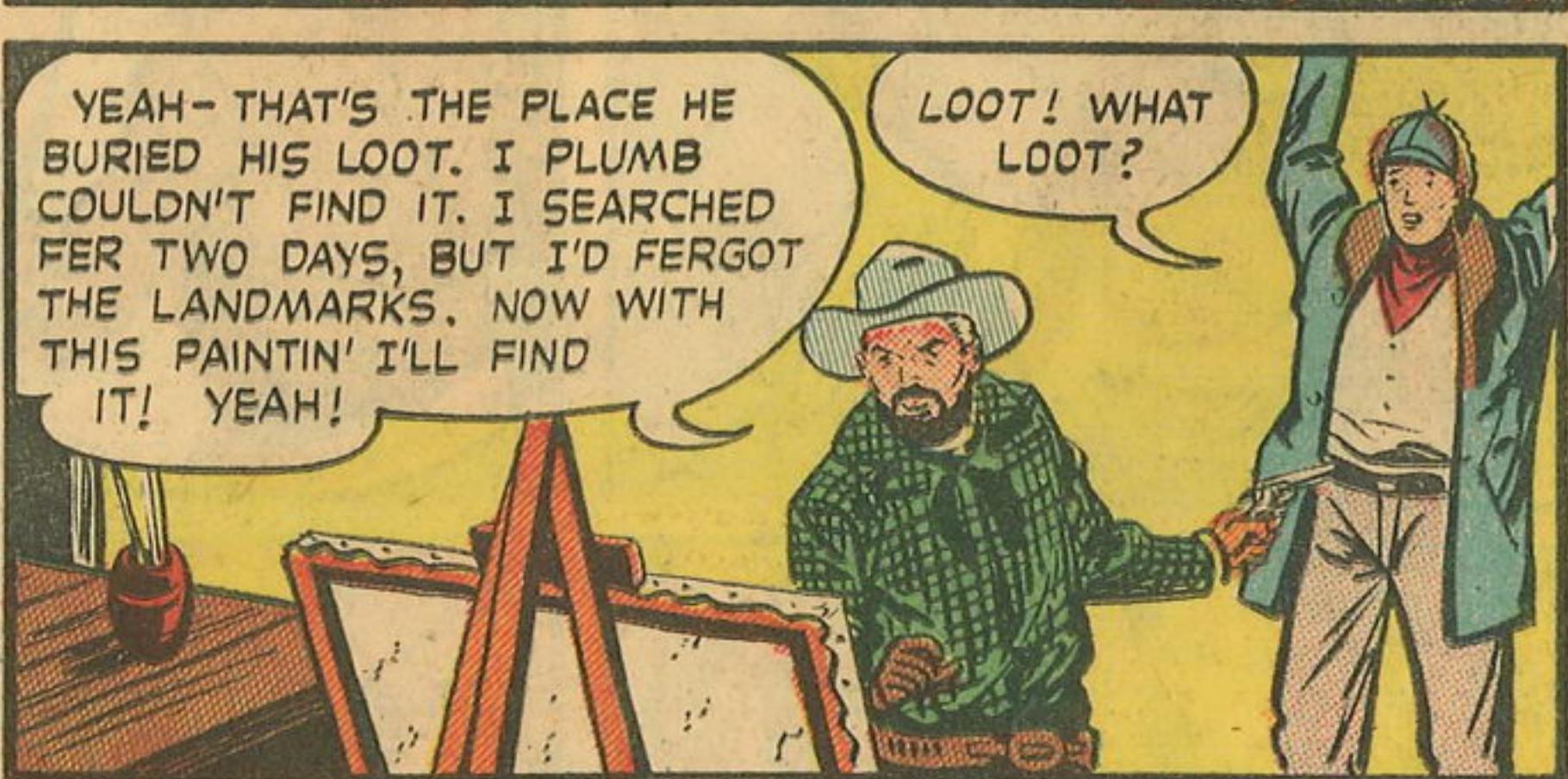
MOMENTS LATER, THE CABIN DOOR SWINGS INWARD -

A NICE PICTURE, HOMBRE! A REAL NICE PICTURE! EASY NOW! STAND AWAY FROM IT!



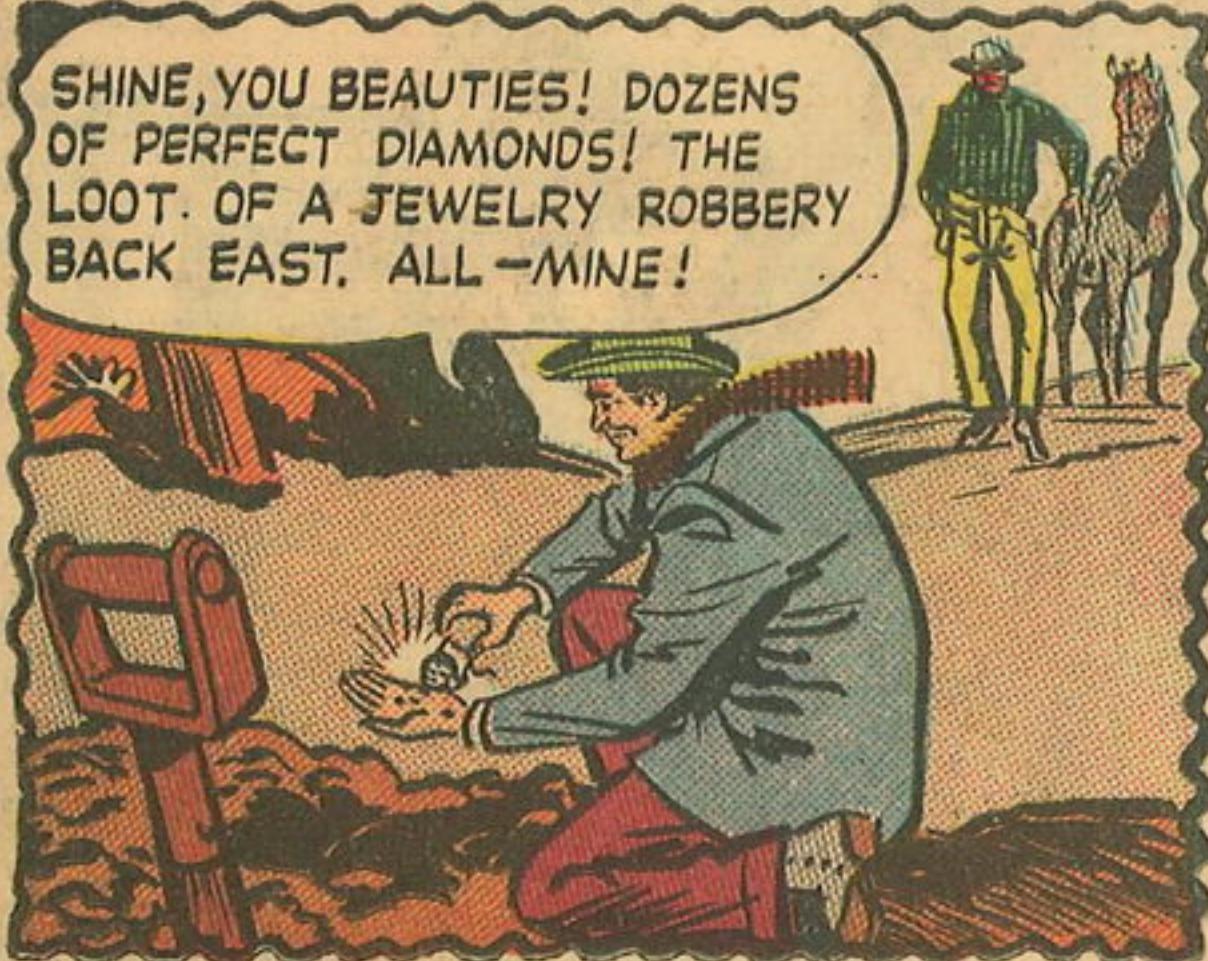
YEAH - THAT'S THE PLACE HE BURIED HIS LOOT. I PLUMB COULDN'T FIND IT. I SEARCHED FER TWO DAYS, BUT I'D FERGOT THE LANDMARKS. NOW WITH THIS PAINTIN' I'LL FIND IT! YEAH!

LOOT! WHAT LOOT?



WITH A GRIM SMILE, ROD BUFORD EXPLAINS: "I CAME INTO THIS RANGE THROUGH RIPSAW PASS. NOBODY KNEW ME HERE. I DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY. FIRST DAY, THOUGH, I STUMBLED ON JIM TREW - DIGGING....!"

SHINE, YOU BEAUTIES! DOZENS OF PERFECT DIAMONDS! THE LOOT OF A JEWELRY ROBBERY BACK EAST. ALL-MINE!



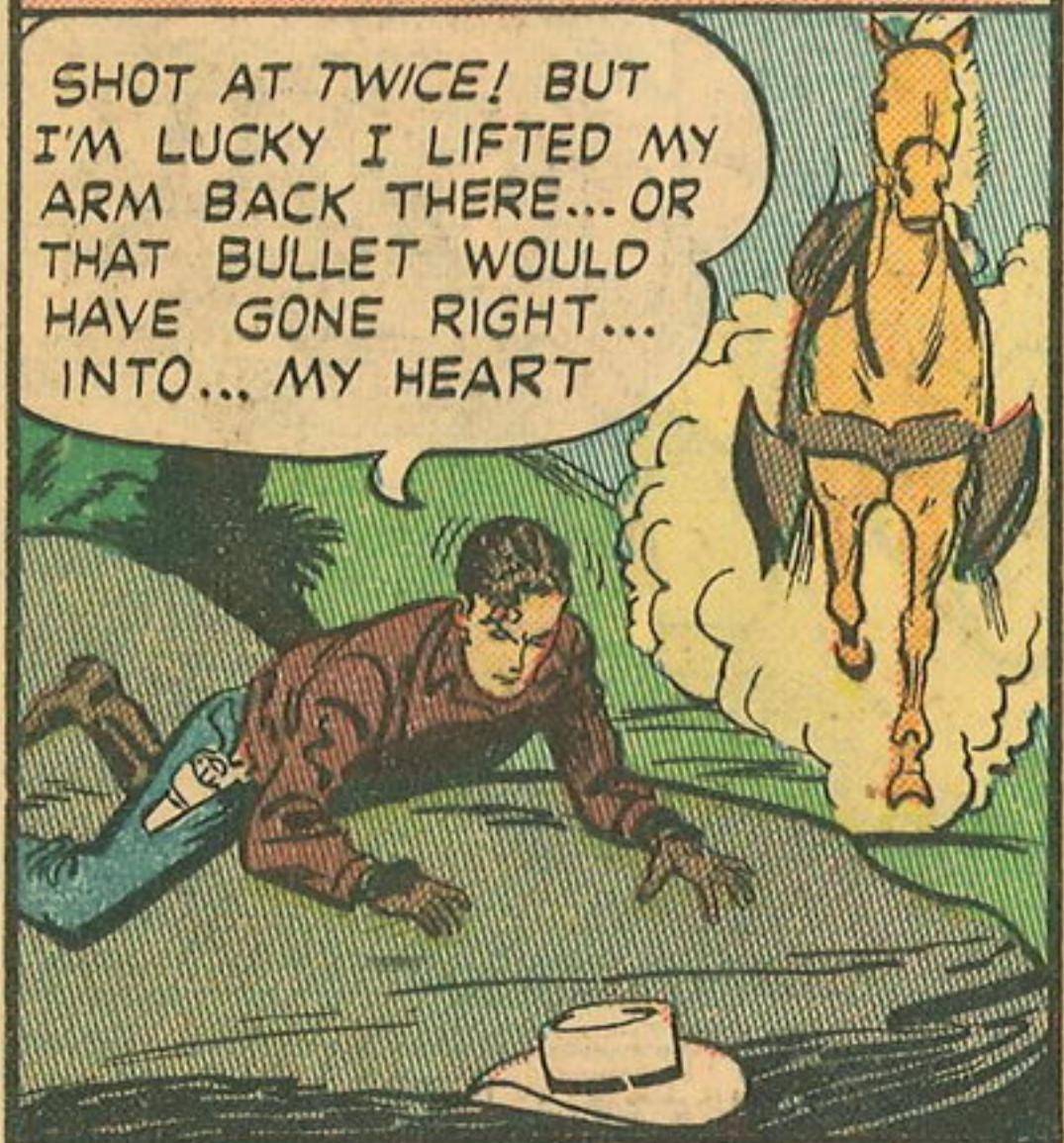
IT WAS A FORTUNE! I WAS JUST FIXIN' TO SALIVATE HIM WHEN I SAW YOU - PAINTIN'! I VAMOSSED BUT TRAILED TREW - SHOT AN' KILLED HIM - JUST LIKE I'M GOIN' TO SHOOT AN' KILL YUH! I MISSED YUH BEFORE - BUT I WON'T MISS NOW!



# TIM HOLT

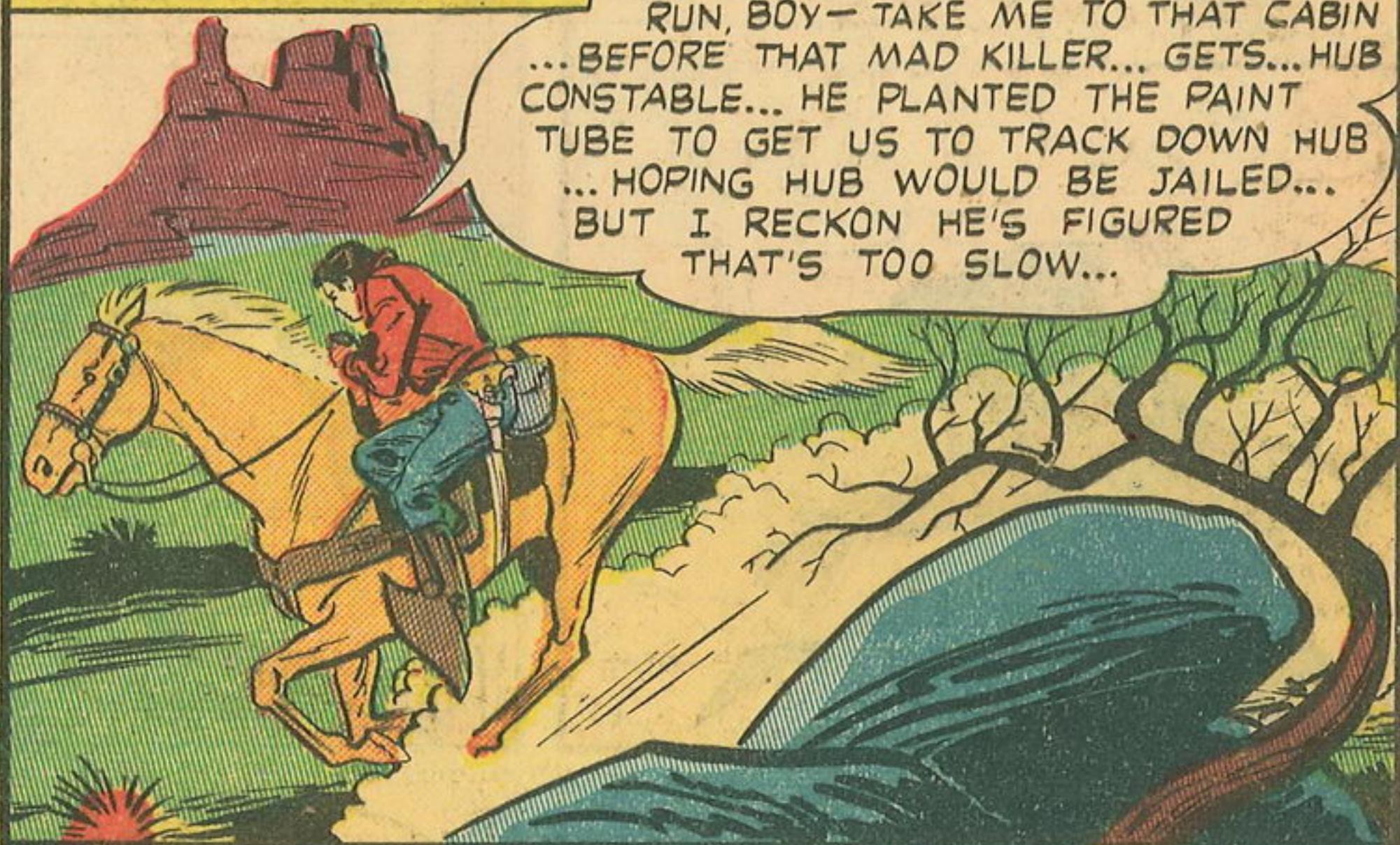
LESS THAN A MILE AWAY, TIM STIRS AND MOVES ALONG THE GROUND, PAIN THROBBING IN HEAD AND ARM.

SHOT AT TWICE! BUT I'M LUCKY I LIFTED MY ARM BACK THERE... OR THAT BULLET WOULD HAVE GONE RIGHT... INTO... MY HEART

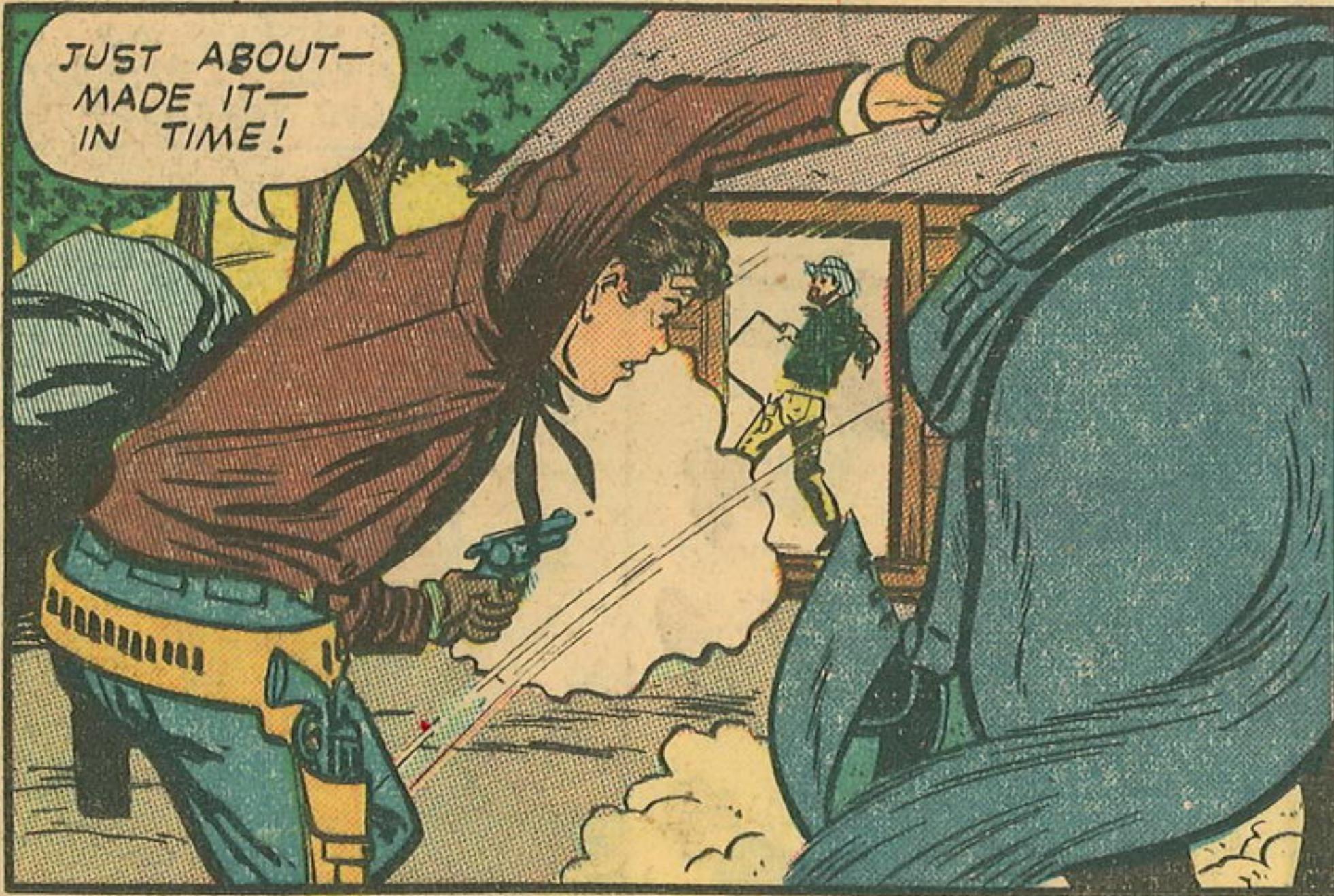


FIGHTING THE SICK DIZZINESS THAT FILLS HIM, TIM CLINGS TO SADDLE AND STIRRUP —

RUN, BOY — TAKE ME TO THAT CABIN ... BEFORE THAT MAD KILLER... GETS... HUB CONSTABLE... HE PLANTED THE PAINT TUBE TO GET US TO TRACK DOWN HUB ... HOPING HUB WOULD BE JAILED... BUT I RECKON HE'S FIGURED THAT'S TOO SLOW...



JUST ABOUT—  
MADE IT—  
IN TIME!



OWWW!  
NOW'S MY  
CHANCE!



GNNGGG!

GIT BACK, HOMBRE!  
I AIN'T KILLED MEN  
FER NOTHIN'! I AIM  
TO GET THOSE  
DIAMONDS!

THUDD!



RECKON THAT HOMBRE  
I SHOT BACK ON THE TRAIL  
IS STILL ALIVE. BUT HE  
WON'T BE — SOON'S I  
CAN THROW DOWN ON HIM  
AGAIN...

FIGHTING THE AGONY OF HIS TWO  
WOUNDS, TIM THROWS HIMSELF  
THROUGH THE DOORWAY OF THE CABIN  
— JUST AS ROD BUFORD HURLES  
OUT —



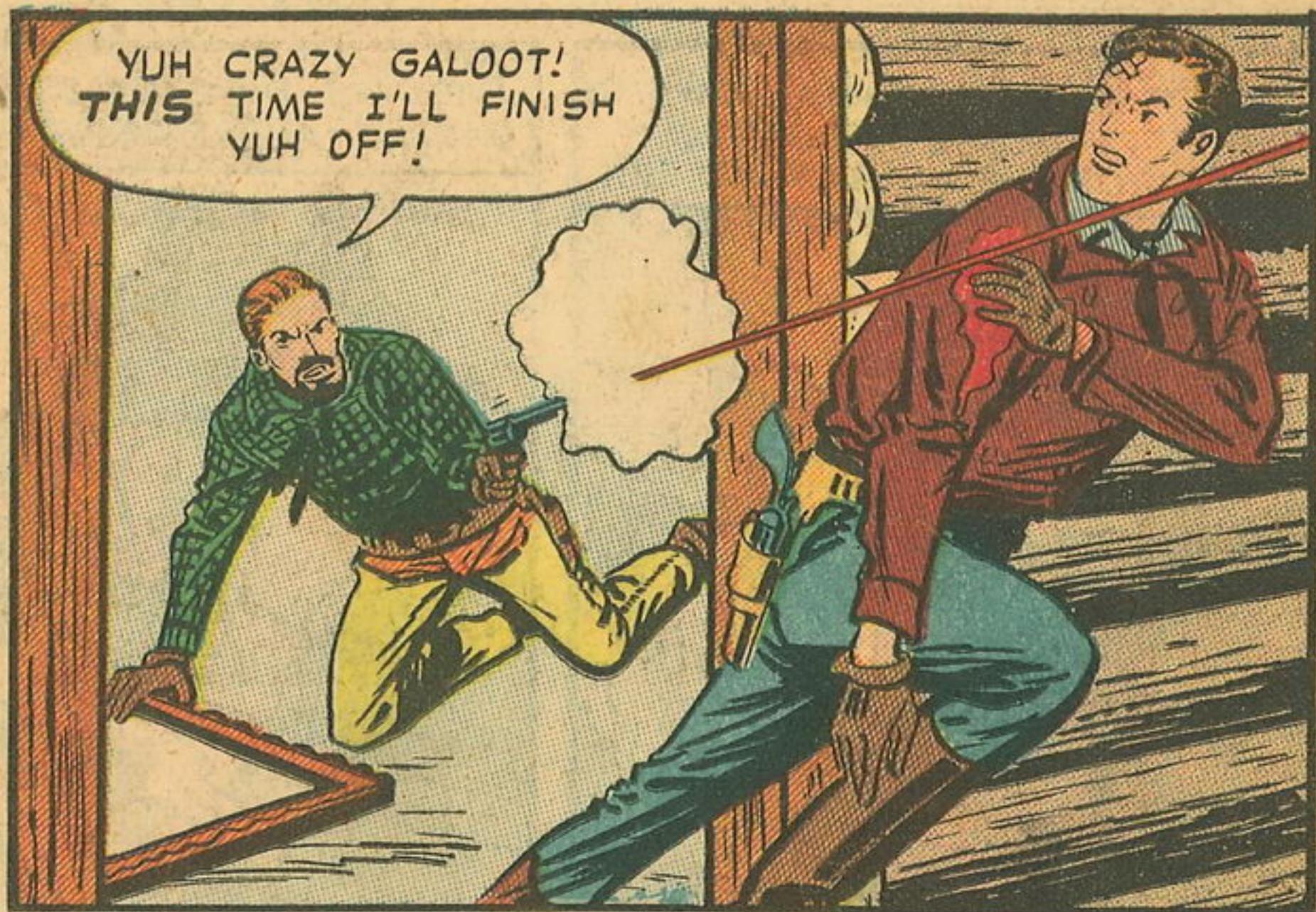
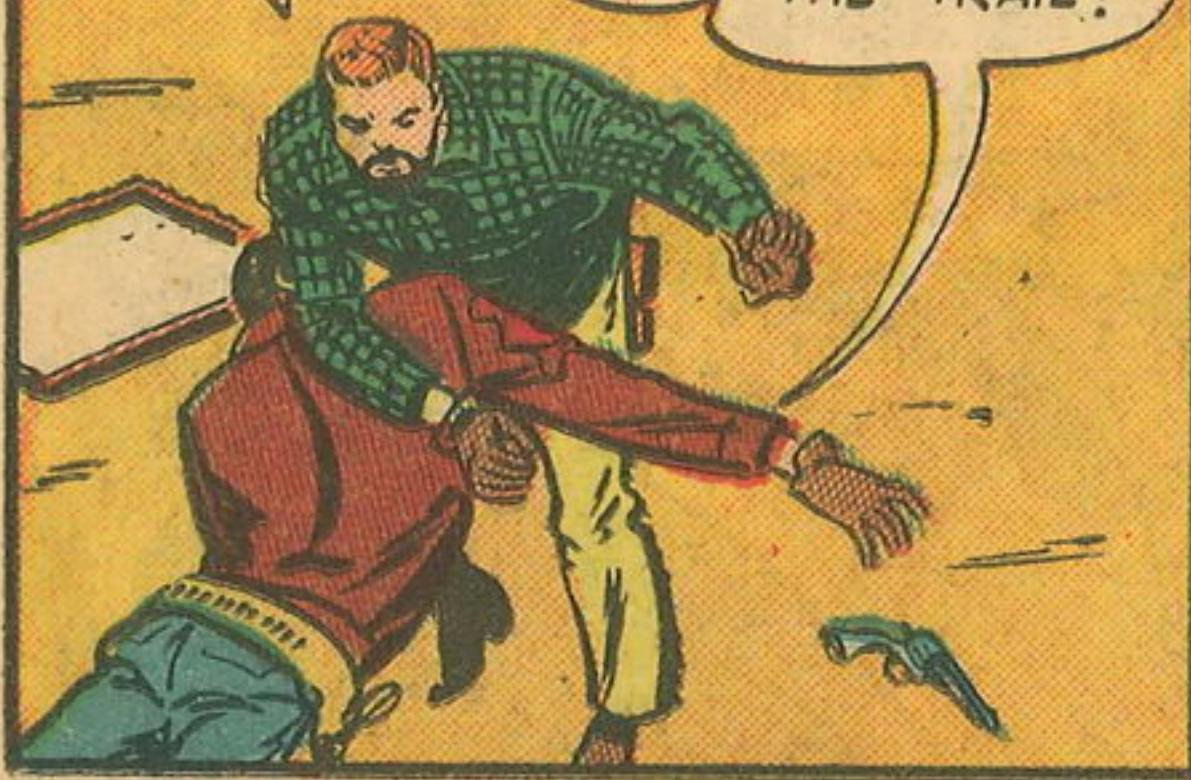
## TIM HOLT

LIKE AN ENRAGED WILDCAT, TIM FORGETS HIS PAIN! HE CATAPULTS HIMSELF AT THE KILLER! RAMS HIM WITH A MUSCLE STUDED SHOULDER!

OWWFF!

RECKON— YOU HAVE JUST ABOUT— COME TO THE END OF THE TRAIL!

YUH CRAZY GALOOT!  
THIS TIME I'LL FINISH YUH OFF!



ALTHOUGH THE SHOCK OF HIS FALL NUMBS HIS RIGHT SIDE, TIM LASHES OUT WITH HIS FOOT —



NO, YOU DON'T!

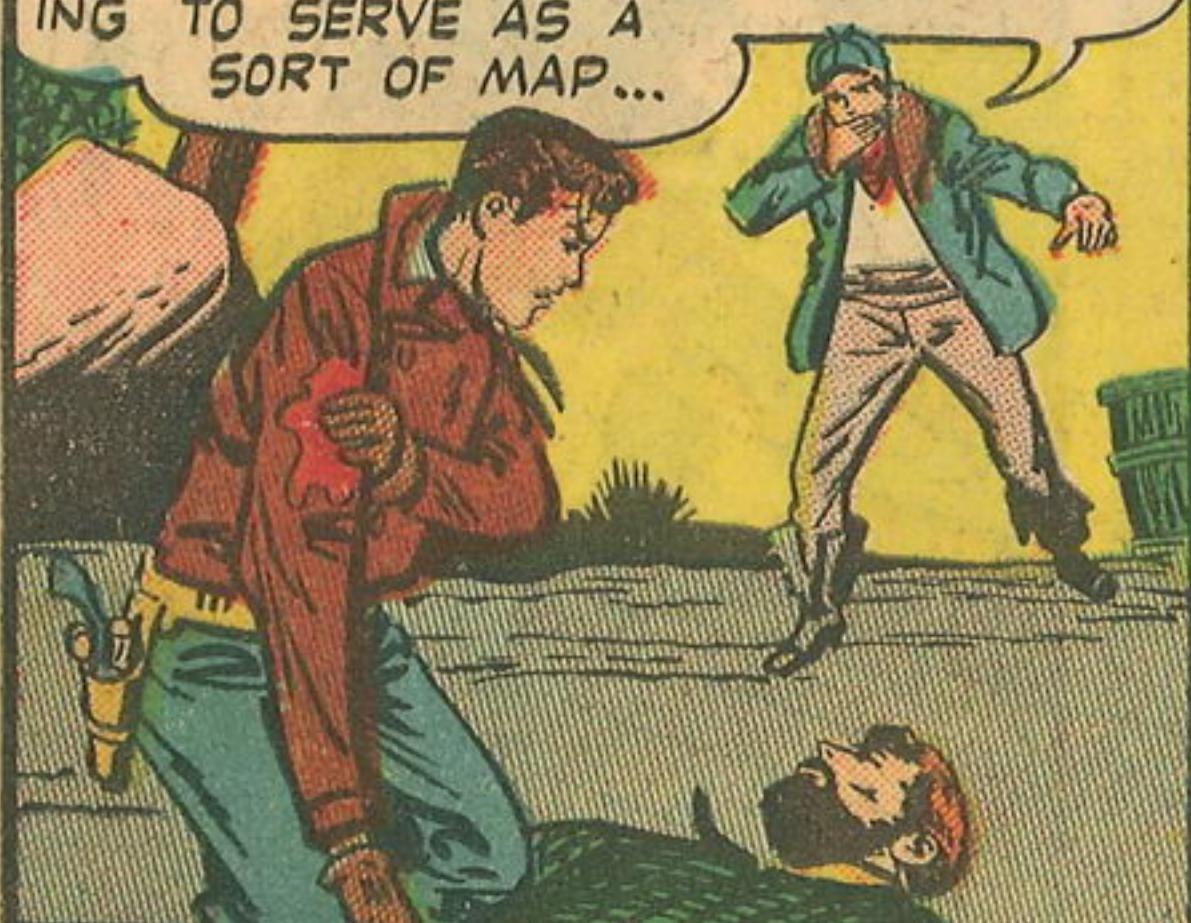


TIM LIFTS HIS FEET IN A WILD CONTORTION AS HE THUDS DOWN ON THE WILDLY STRUGGLING BUFORD. THE KILLER CRIES OUT SHARPLY... AND GOES LIMP...

RECKON MY KNEES— AGAINST YOUR SIXGUN — IS A FAIR FIGHT...

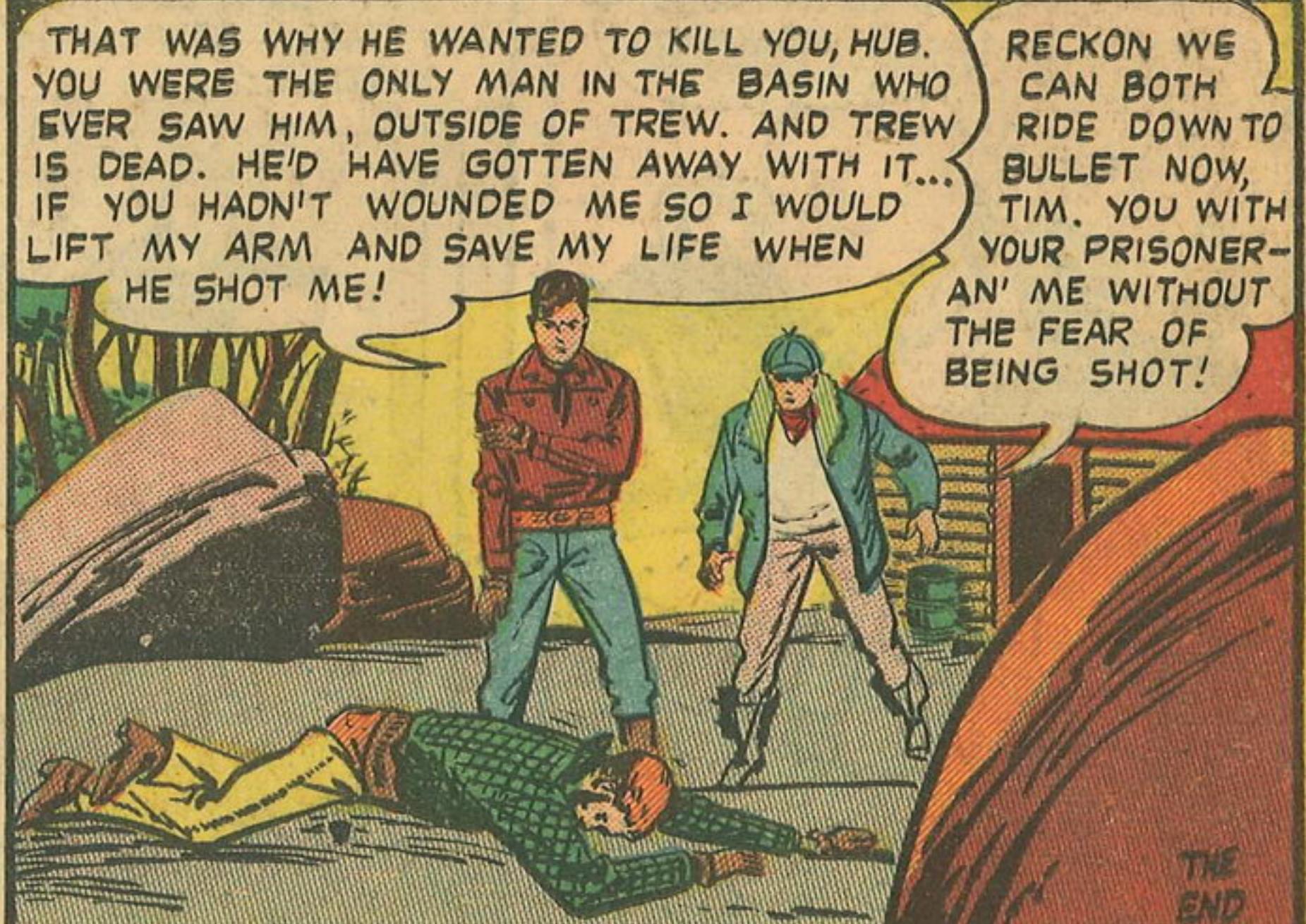


HE SHOT TREW. HE TOLD ME TREW HAD DIAMONDS HIDDEN. TREW WAS A CROOK BACK EAST WHO CAME OUT HERE UNTIL THE HEAT DIED DOWN! BUT BUFORD COULDN'T FIND WHERE TREW BURIED THE DIAMONDS. HE WANTED MY PAINTING TO SERVE AS A SORT OF MAP...



THAT WAS WHY HE WANTED TO KILL YOU, HUB. YOU WERE THE ONLY MAN IN THE BASIN WHO EVER SAW HIM, OUTSIDE OF TREW. AND TREW IS DEAD. HE'D HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT... IF YOU HADN'T WOUNDED ME SO I WOULD LIFT MY ARM AND SAVE MY LIFE WHEN HE SHOT ME!

RECKON WE CAN BOTH RIDE DOWN TO BULLET NOW, TIM. YOU WITH YOUR PRISONER— AN' ME WITHOUT THE FEAR OF BEING SHOT!



THE END

TIM HOLT

# the GHOST RIDER

DICK  
AYERS

THE GHOST RIDER, SPECTRAL NEMESIS OF JUSTICE, BRINGS ANOTHER CRIMINAL TO THE END OF A KILLER'S CAREER. STRIKING NERVE-CURDLING TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF HIS ENEMIES, THE GHOST RIDER TAKES HIS SKILLFUL KNOWLEDGE OF THE MINDS OF MEN—AND ADDS IT TO THE WHIP OF GUILTY CONSCIENCE IN "SCOURGE OF GUILT!"

THE  
DEAD ONES  
RISE TO  
CONDAMN  
YOUR CRIME,  
MURDERER.

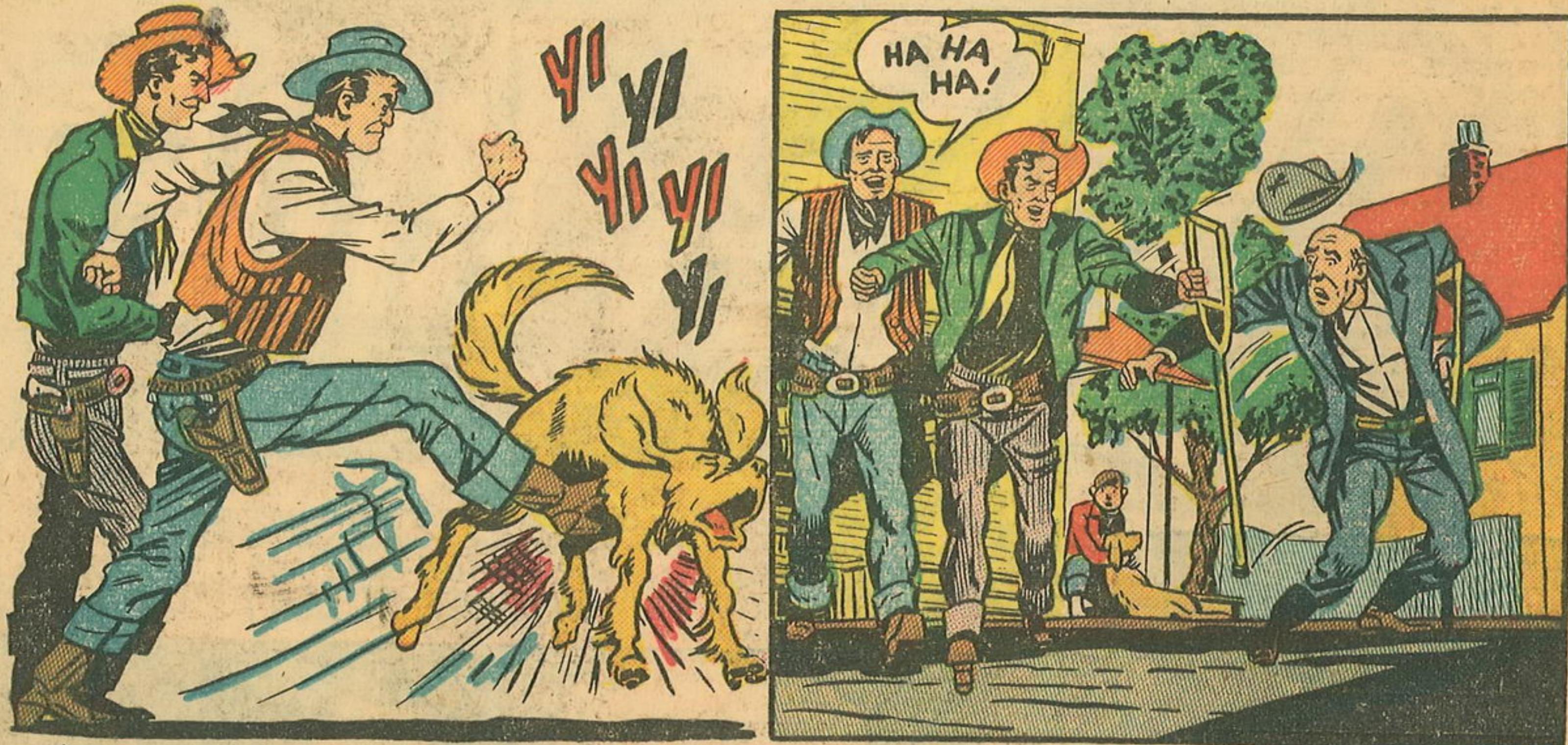
GOHOSTS!  
GOHOSTS!  
GOHOSTS!

Citizen  
of Dry Rock —  
Sheriff Cal Banner  
was murdered in  
cold blood! I will  
not rest until I  
bring his killer to  
justice.  
The Ghost Rider

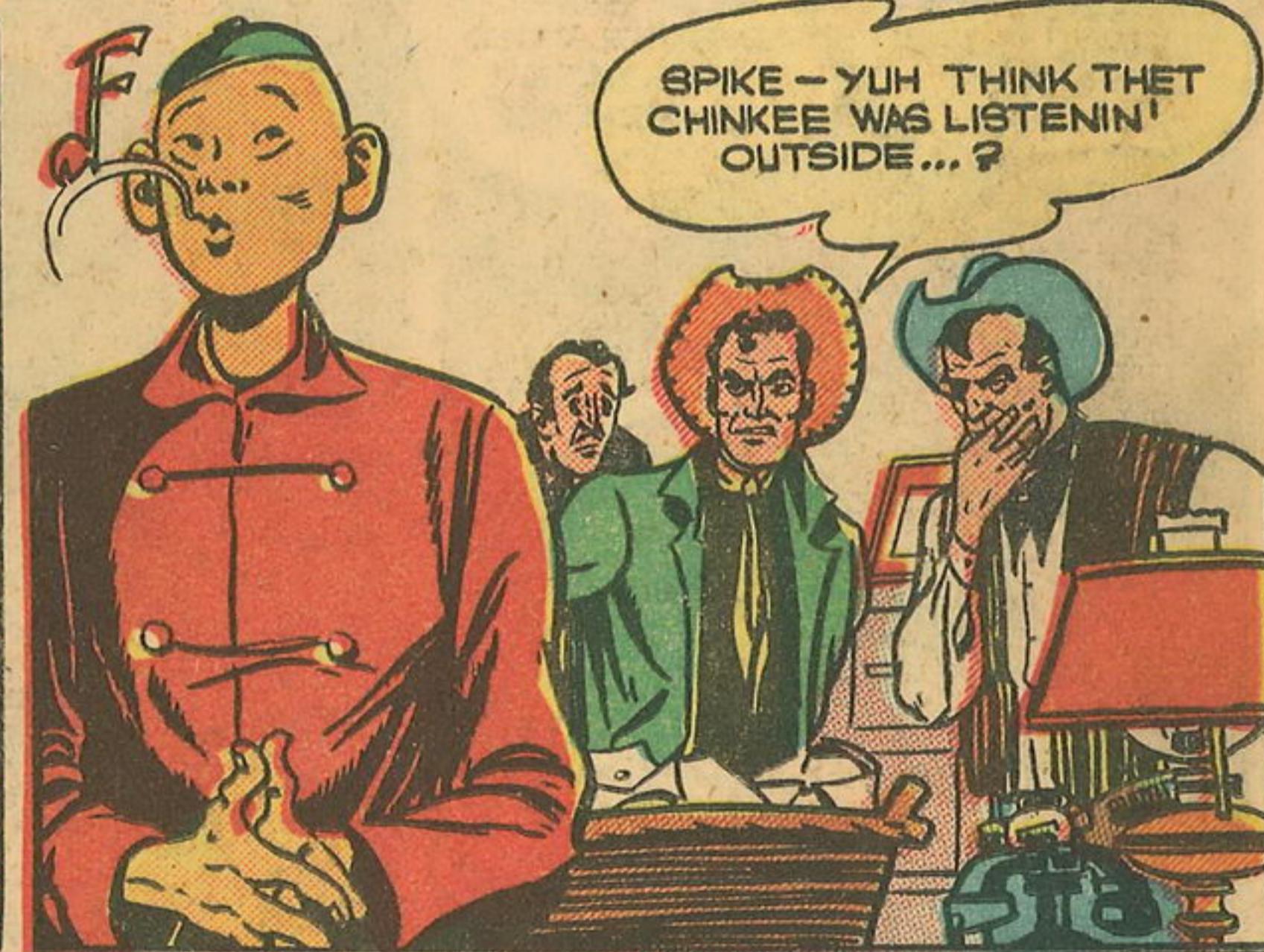
HMMPH!

SHERIFF'S  
OFFICE

# TIM HOLT



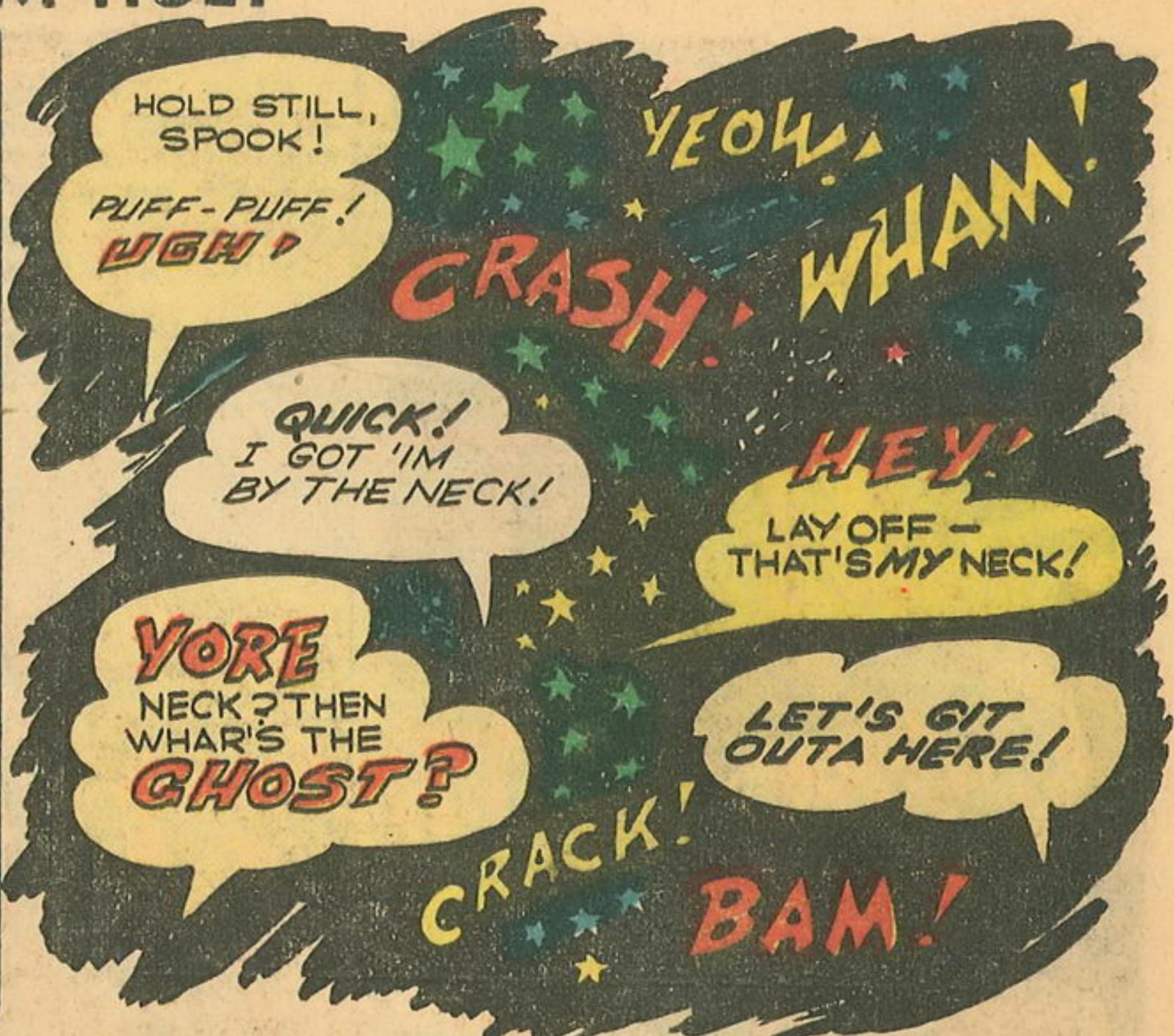
# TIM HOLT



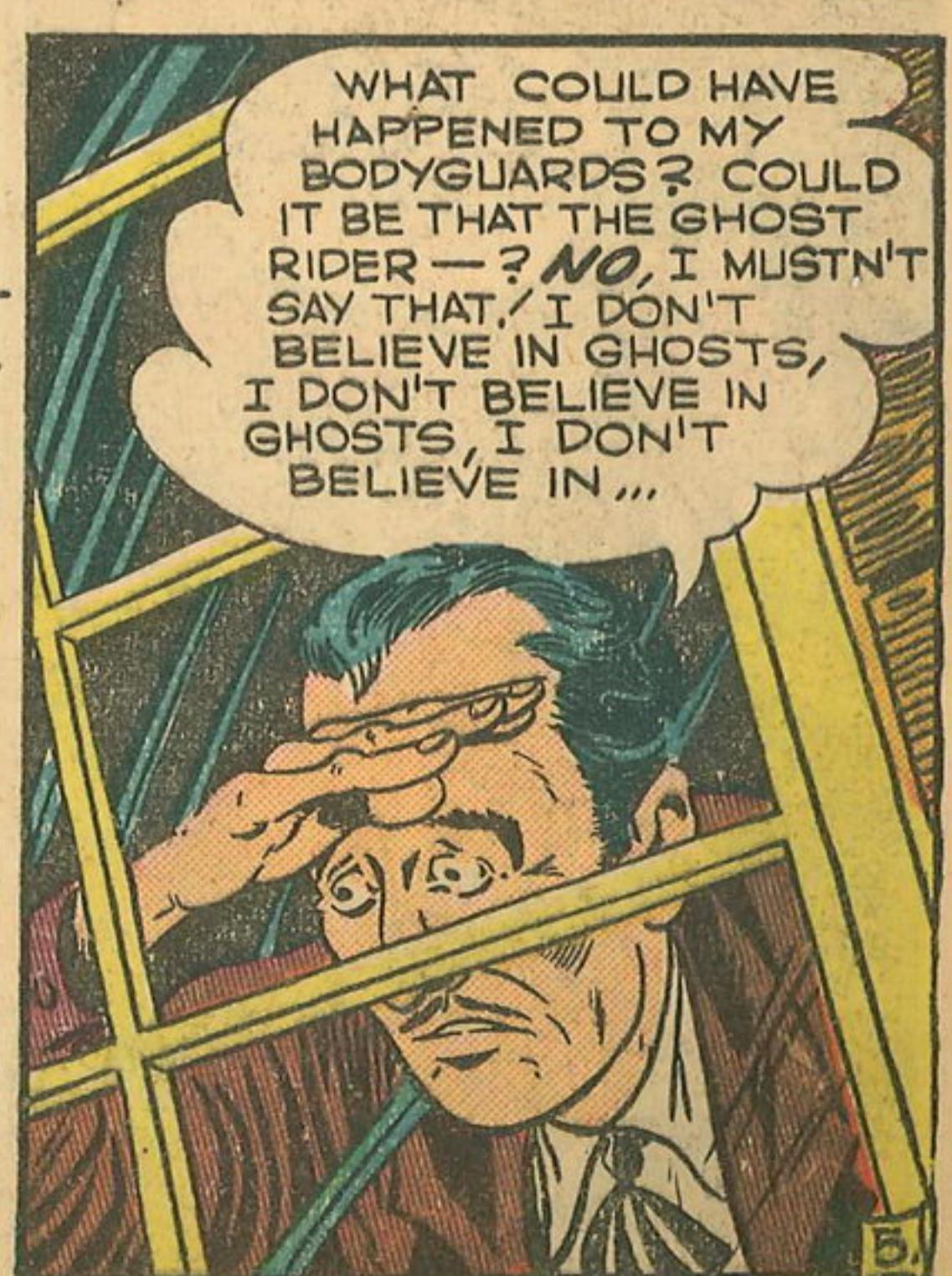
# TIM HOLT



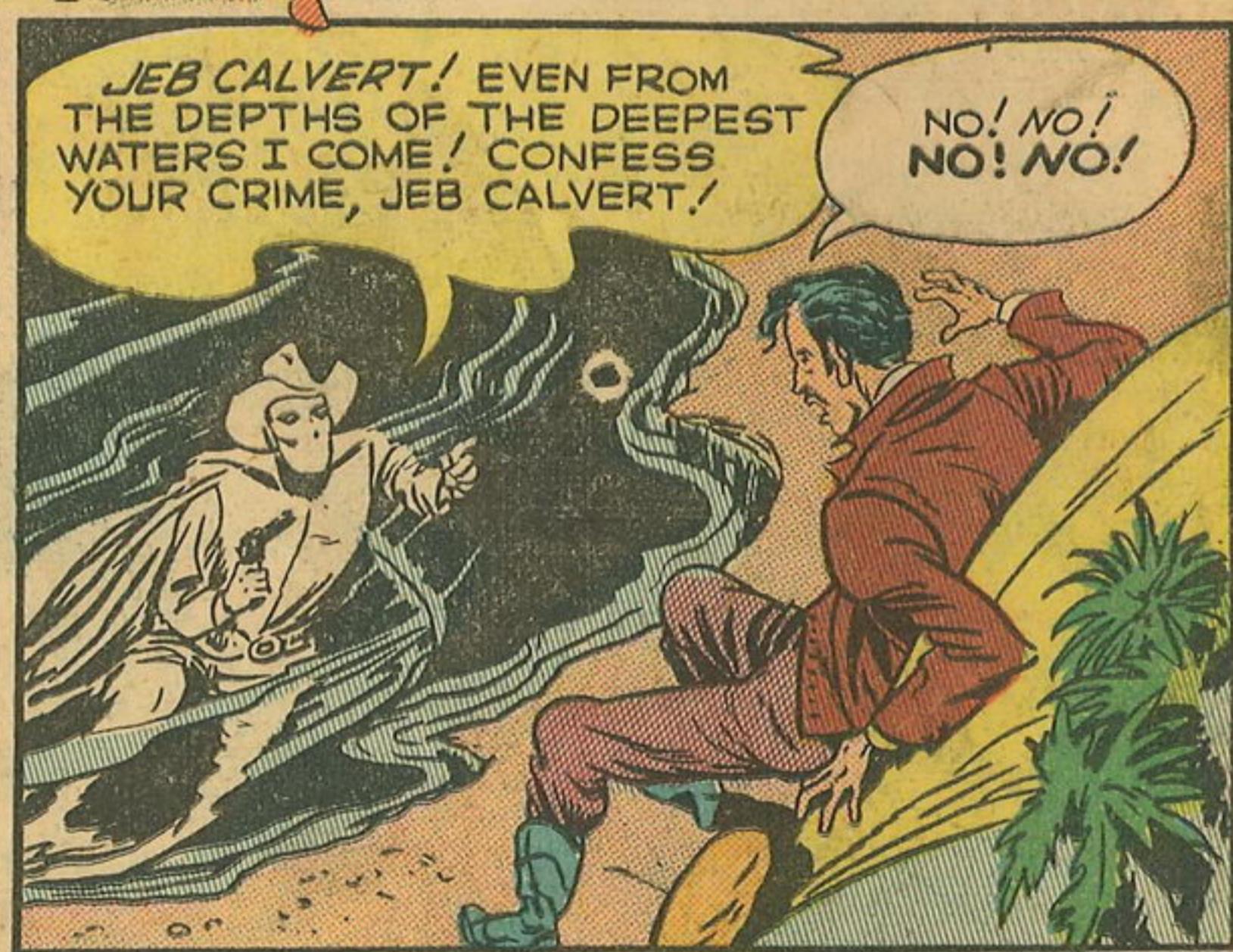
# TIM HOLT



THE  
GHOST RIDER  
KNOWS THE  
MINDS OF MEN -  
FOR FEAR  
CLOSES ITS ICY  
FIST AROUND  
JEB CALVERT'S  
HEART...  
AT  
CALVERT'S  
RANCHHOUSE  
...



## TIM HOLT



# TIM HOLT

GRAZED WITH  
FEAR AND GUILT,  
CALVERT TWISTS  
AND TURNS IN HIS  
MAD FLIGHT—  
BUT IT SEEMS  
THE GHOST  
RIDER  
IS EVERYWHERE.

NO LONGER  
ABLE TO REASON  
SANELY, HE  
CLIMBS A  
SILO.

I'LL BE SAFE UP  
HERE! ONLY WAY  
UP IS THIS  
LADDER AND  
I CAN DEFEND  
THAT!

NOW, THAT'S A  
CRAZY THING FOR  
HIM TO DO—  
THERE'S MORE  
THAN ONE WAY TO  
BEAT HIM TO THE  
TOP OF THAT  
SILO.

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS  
LOOP MY LARIAT OVER  
THAT WINCH ARM UP THERE—  
AND LET MY HORSE, SPECTRE,  
PULL ONE END ...

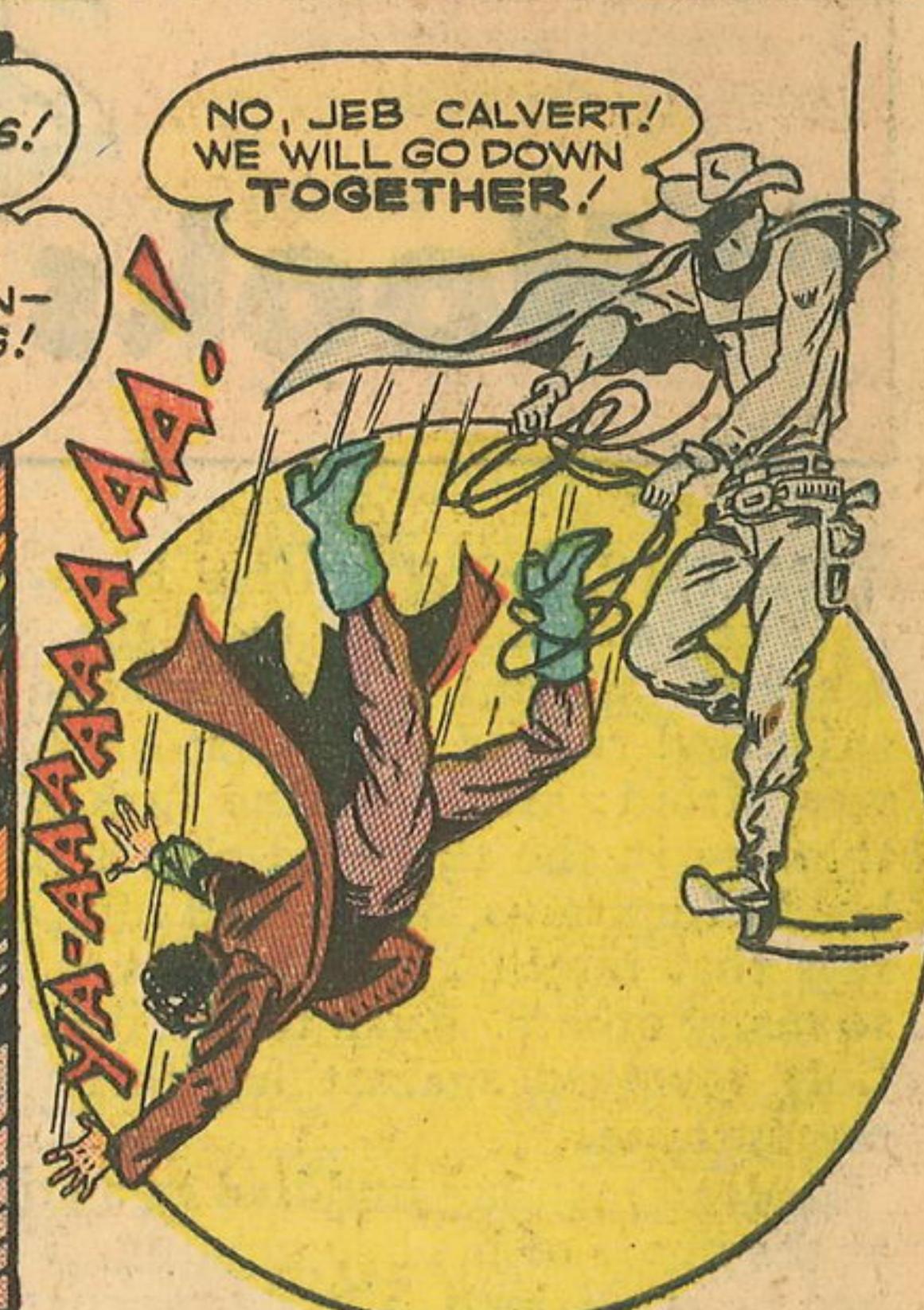


... AND I GET LIFTED UP LIKE  
A BALE OF HAY. MY LARIAT,  
BEING SPECIALLY DYED BLACK,  
IS INVISIBLE— CALVERT WILL  
THINK I'M FLYING!

HIGH OR LOW,  
STILL I COME,  
JEB CALVERT!  
CONFESS!  
GIVE UP!

THIS  
FIEND FLIES!  
HE IS A  
GHOST!  
THERE'S NO  
USE GOING ON—  
NO USE LIVING!  
I'LL JUMP!

NO, JEB CALVERT!  
WE WILL GO DOWN  
TOGETHER!

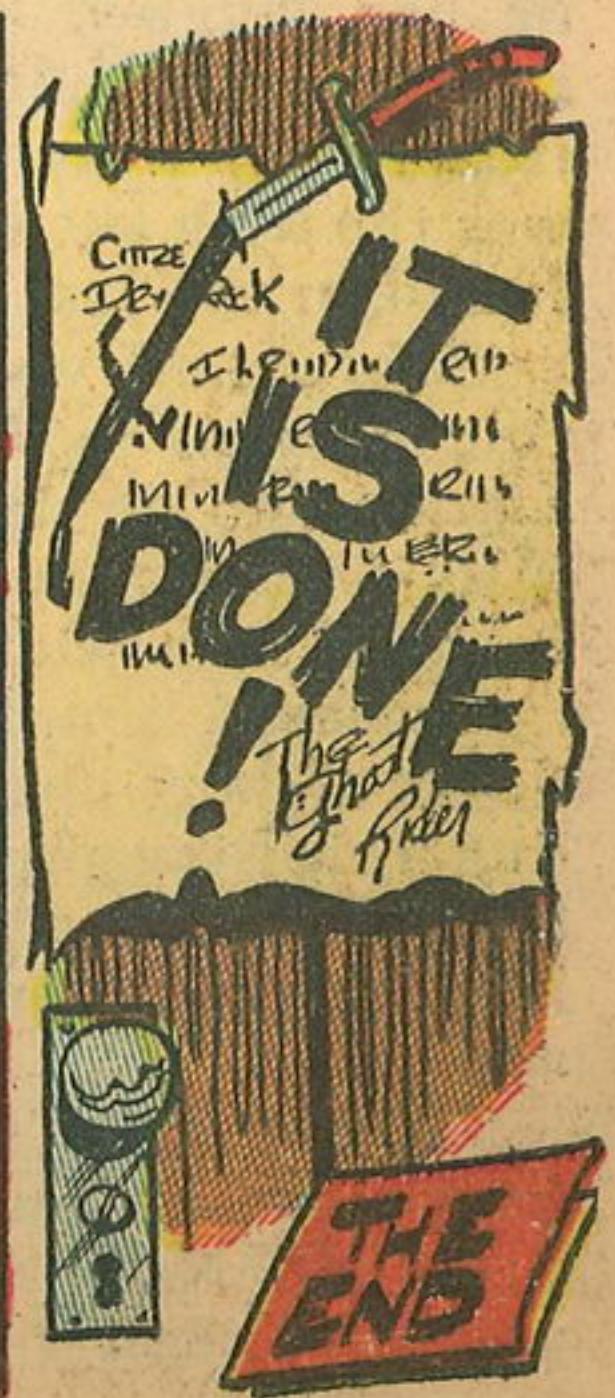


AND WE'LL GO BACK  
TO TOWN AND TO JUSTICE  
TOGETHER!



HERE HE IS, CITIZENS—  
THE MURDERER OF  
SHERIFF BANNER!  
THE GHOST RIDER  
NEVER FAILS!

YES, I DID IT!  
I DID IT!  
JAIL ME, KILL ME.  
—ANYTHING!  
JUST GET ME AWAY  
FROM THIS FIEND!



**TIM HOLT**



## The Hooks of Horror!

JIM THURLOW shifted his weight in the Pueblo saddle so that the stiff leather creaked. He put a shaking hand to his blue shirt and rubbed the sweat off his palm. He was afraid: afraid of the lurking *something* that lay in the timbered slopes of the Horsehead Mountains, all around him, afraid of the fate that might await him as it had awaited so many others. Even the weight of his heavy Colt revolver against his thigh brought no reassurance.

A dead man lay huddled in a crushed cactus at the hoofs of his bay gelding. The dead man had been a friend, a little rancher with whom he had laughed back in Natahatchi. On his face was the burned imprint of a branding iron in the shape of a hook. The dead man was the fifth such man that Jim Thurlowe had found in the last two months.

"Might be I was plumb hasty in takin' over this marshal job," he told the gelding. "Now I got to go on up there—back into the high hills—and try to learn what hombre is stampin' dead men with a hook iron."

He eased himself out of the kak and lifted down a short spade from his saddle roll. He dug a shallow grave and covered it with stones. Then he drew a sleeve across his damp forehead and squinted thoughtfully at the setting sun.

"Don't cotton to the idea of bein' alone up here at night, but I reckon I can't ride back down to Natahatchi without some sort of action to show for my ride. Folks have been

askin' embarrassin' questions about me, lately. They want to know who's been doin' all the killin' and brandin' up here on Horsehead."

Sighing, Thurlowe stepped into the stirrup and swung up. He eased the bay forward under the firs and the cedars, moving steadily upward along a carpet of fallen pine needles. As he rode, he loosened the revolver in its holster at his side.

The killings—all five of them, all with the hook brand etched into their faces with a red-hot branding iron—had begun a little over two months ago. Prior to the first killing, the small ranchers on the slopes of Horsehead Mountain had reported cattle missing. There had been no clues as to where they had gone, but one rancher told Thurlowe that he was "fixin' to ride straight up old Horsehead. Them steers got to be somewhere. If they ain't below my spread, they sure got to be above it!" Two days later, the rancher's body, riddled with shells and branded on the cheek, had been discovered.

"It was right after that when the folks got scared," the marshall brooded. "Two other hombres turned up the same way—shot and branded! Those hooks on their faces—burned deep! Hooks of horror, everybody called 'em."

And now old Ed Silliman lay in a shallow grave, back there a few miles. Number five in the hook-brand mystery! A cold wind came down out of the Horsehead pines and made

## TIM HOLT

Jim Thurlowe shiver. Would he be—number six?

He was bending his head to pass under the curving branch of a giant conifer when something thin and wet whipped across his face—

Jim Thurlowe screamed. Whatever it was stung and bit, and clung like a living thing to his chin and throat! After a moment it slipped down off his chin, circling his neck. It tightened, squeezing! Thurlowe heard a low roaring in his ears, saw tiny red globes of pain swim up before his staring eyes!

His hands clawed at the thing. In the darkness he had not recognized it. Now his fingers knew it as a lariat, dipped in water. And then, just when his fingers were ripping at it to loosen it, the red pain swam up all around him, knocking him backwards into a roaring blackness. . . .

Jim Thurlowe opened his eyes to the red dance of a campfire. Three men were watching him carefully, their cruel little eyes bright in the firelight. One was an Indian with black, dank hair framing his flat, coppery face, his muscular arms bare and long. The others were heavy-browed, their faces revealing the greeds and hungers that directed their every move. In them, Thurlowe recognized typical outlaws.

One of the white men, a man with a dotted neckerchief hanging around his neck, kicked suddenly at a branding iron buried in the glowing red logs of the fire. His grin was sly.

He asked, "Yuh been shadowin' us long enough to have known yore way in an' out of these hills, lawman! We're plumb surprised yuh fell into our little trap."

To speak hurt his throat, but Jim Thurlowe forced his words. "Shadow you? I've never been on these heights before."

The other white man, a slight beard hiding his jaw and mouth, stepped across the edge of the fire and drove a fist into Thurlowe's face. "Don't lie to us, marshal. It ain't healthy! We ain't babes in these woods. We've heard yuh out there, spyin' on us. But even the 'breed couldn't find yuh! What's yore secret? We sure nuff aim to learn it. Might come in handy, eh, Hal?"

The man with the spotted neckerchief laughed. "Sure will, 'specially when we move down onto the flats some night to rustle off some more beef."

The Indian moved, bending forward, staring with his flat black eyes into the bright flames. He grunted in satisfaction. "Brand hot now. Make good mark."

Jim Thurlowe froze. His muscles tensed against the ropes that bound him to a big stake. His eyes were drawn by the brand as by a

magnet. "You—you aren't fixin' to mark me—with that?"

The man with the beard slid around behind Thurlowe and looped another lariat over his arms, and neck. The knot of the noose pressed the back of his neck. A savage voice grated in his ear, "Thet's just what we do aim to do, hombre! We don't want no folks climbin' this mountain! If we want folks to see us, we'll come down—fer their cattle. Haw! Haw! Red-man—grab holt of that iron. Git a move on!"

The breed bent forward, lifted the hot red brand. The man behind Thurlowe tensed his powerful body as Jim prepared to struggle.

And then—

The night came alive with sound!

A horse was thundering through the under-brush—a great giant of a white stallion, mane flying in the breeze, hooves thudding on the hard ground! In the saddle, swaying easily to the mad pace of the white horse—black emptiness! *Nothing!*

A cry broke from the lips of the petrified half-breed! He dropped the branding iron and tried to run. But the man with the spotted neckerchief was thrusting him aside. The white horse hit the two of them with his chest and sent them reeling, screaming with pain and fright, onto the blazing fire.

A pale, glowing hand moved from the darkness on top of the stallion—reached down and seemed to bury itself in the shoulder of the man behind Thurlowe—lifted the man and flung him violently aside!

Jim Thurlowe needed only a few seconds to shuck off the ropes that bound him. His hand clawed for his gun on a nearby stool. He whirled, gun in hand—

Now the man that bestrode the white stallion was visible. He was white and shining, as a ghost might be. In his hand a long black whip, almost invisible in the night, lay coiled. Thurlowe gulped in sudden awe. "You—I know you! Men call you—the *Ghost Rider*!"

A deep, sonorous voice answered him. "That is right. I have been watching these men for some days. They heard me, but could not see me. I have marked their hiding places, their cattle grazelands, on this map—together with a record of the men they have killed. Take it. Take the men to town. See that they pay—at the end of a hangman's noose!"

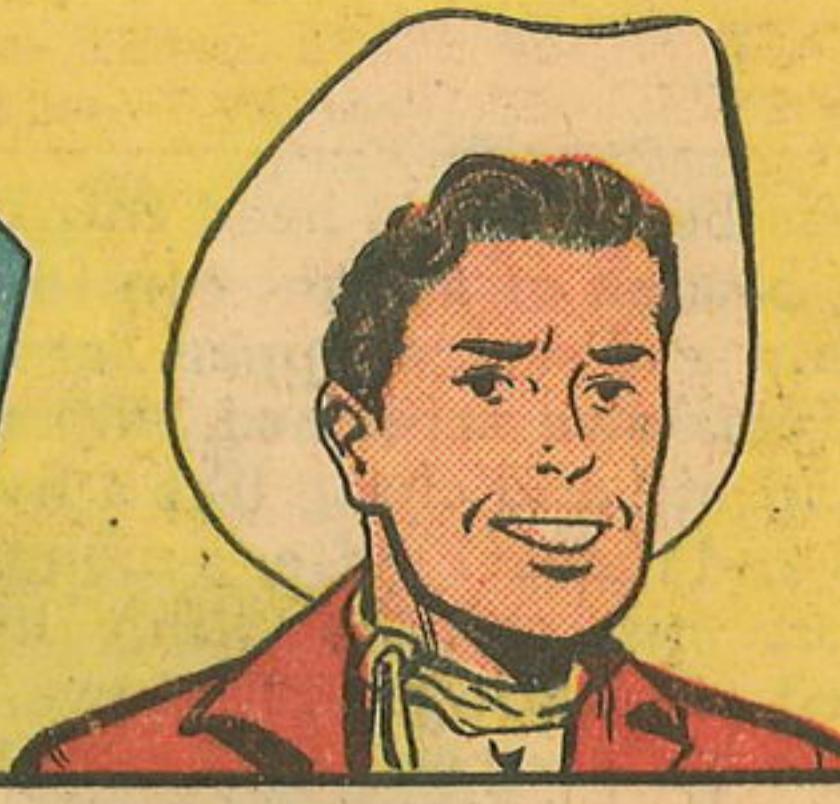
Jim Thurlowe reached out for the papers the mysterious rider was handing him. Then, with a catch at his throat, he saw the great cloak whirl up—and seemingly blot the Ghost Rider from human sight! Now he was just a black nothingness on the white horse. His voice cried out, "Up, Spectre! On!"

And the marshall was left alone with his groaning, terrified prisoners.

The End,

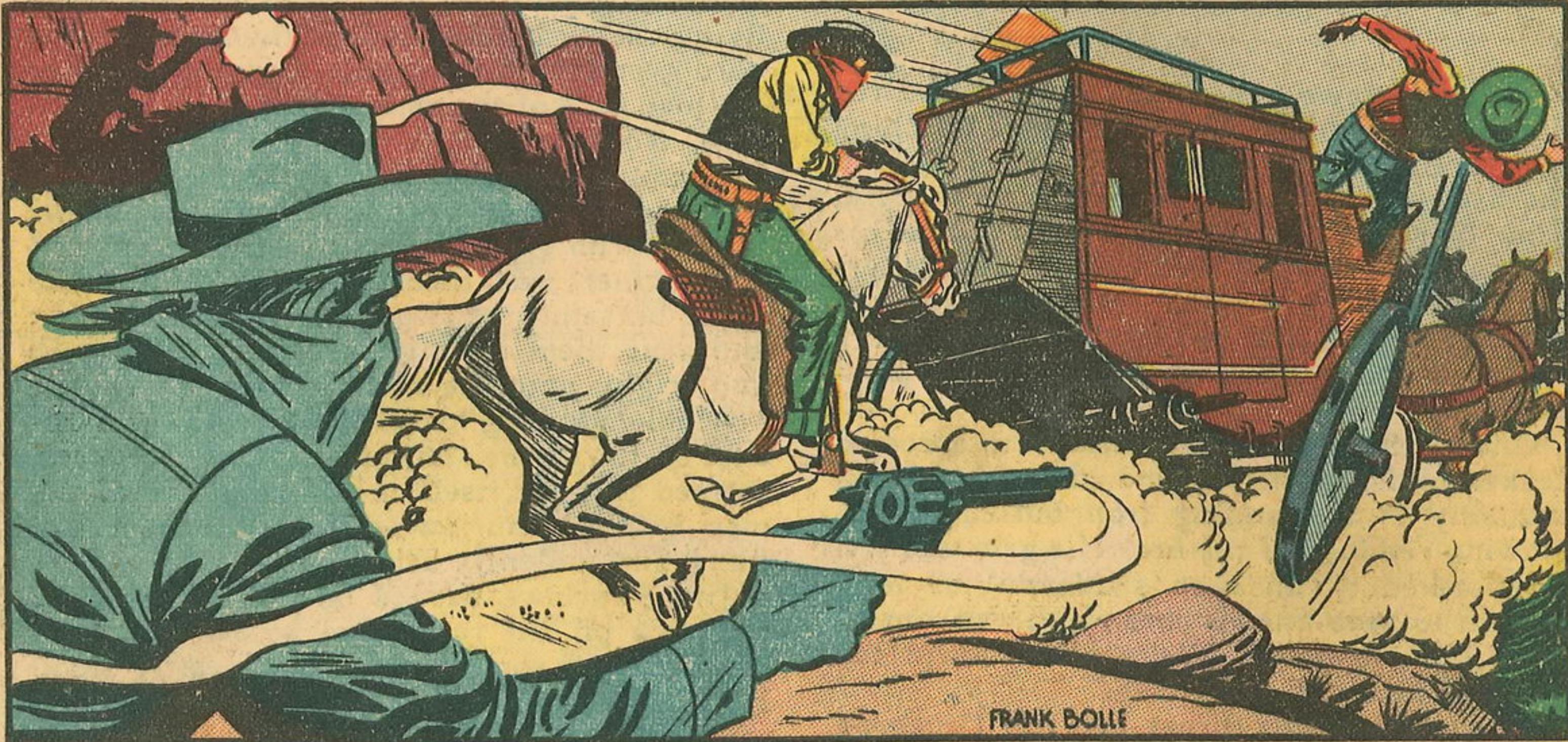
TIM HOLT

# TIM HOLT

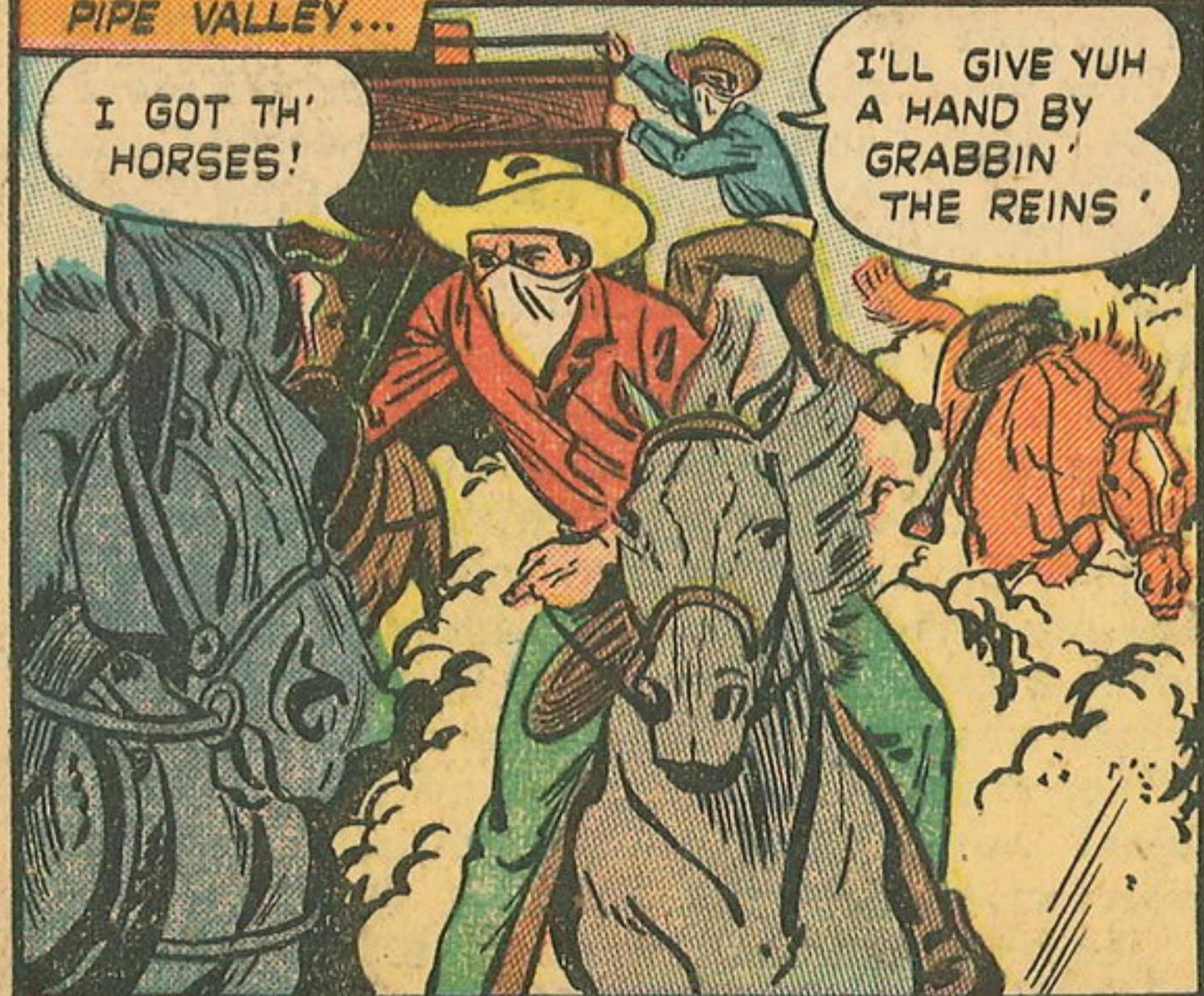


A CAREENING STAGECOACH BEGINS TO TOPPLE AS ITS FEAR-MADDENED HORSES BOLT WITH TERROR! SIXGUNS BLAST THE SILENCE OF THE MOUNTAIN PASS AS MASKED MEN THUNDER ALONGSIDE THE COACH! A GUARD SCREAMS AND FALLS! THE DRIVER LURCHES TO ONE SIDE...!

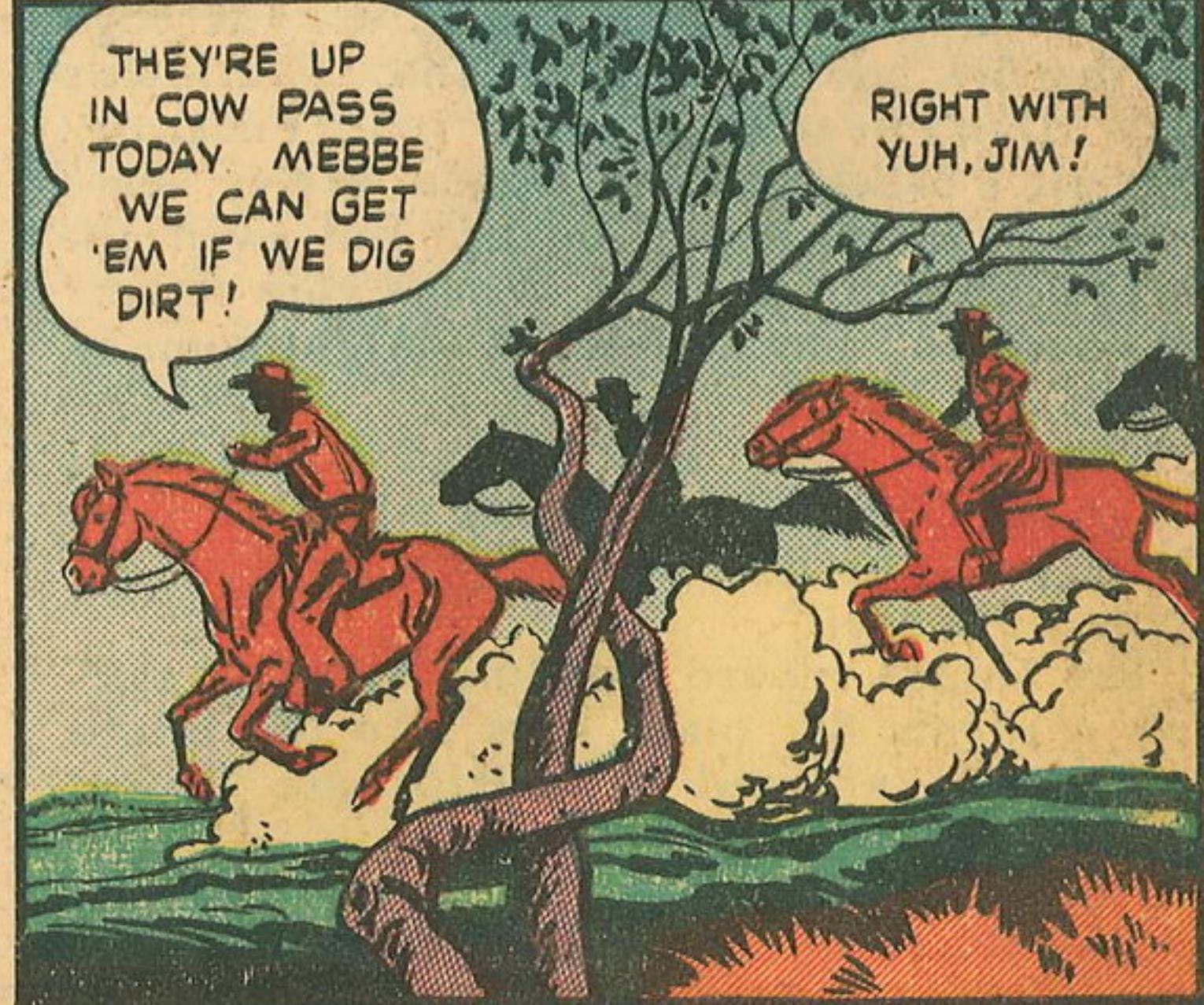
JUST ONE MORE ROBBERY OF THE WARPIPE STAGE...ONE MORE IN A SERIES OF HOLDUPS THAT CASTS A PALL OF FRIGHT ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE...THAT MAKES MEN SEE DANGER WHERE NONE EXISTS...AND INTO THIS FEAR-HAUNTED COW COUNTRY RIDE TIM HOLT AND CHITO... MARKED AS TWO MORE VICTIMS OF—"PRAIRIE PANIC!"



DAY AFTER DAY...ROBBERY AFTER ROBBERY...THE PANIC SWIRLED LIKE WILDFIRE THROUGHOUT WARPIPE VALLEY...

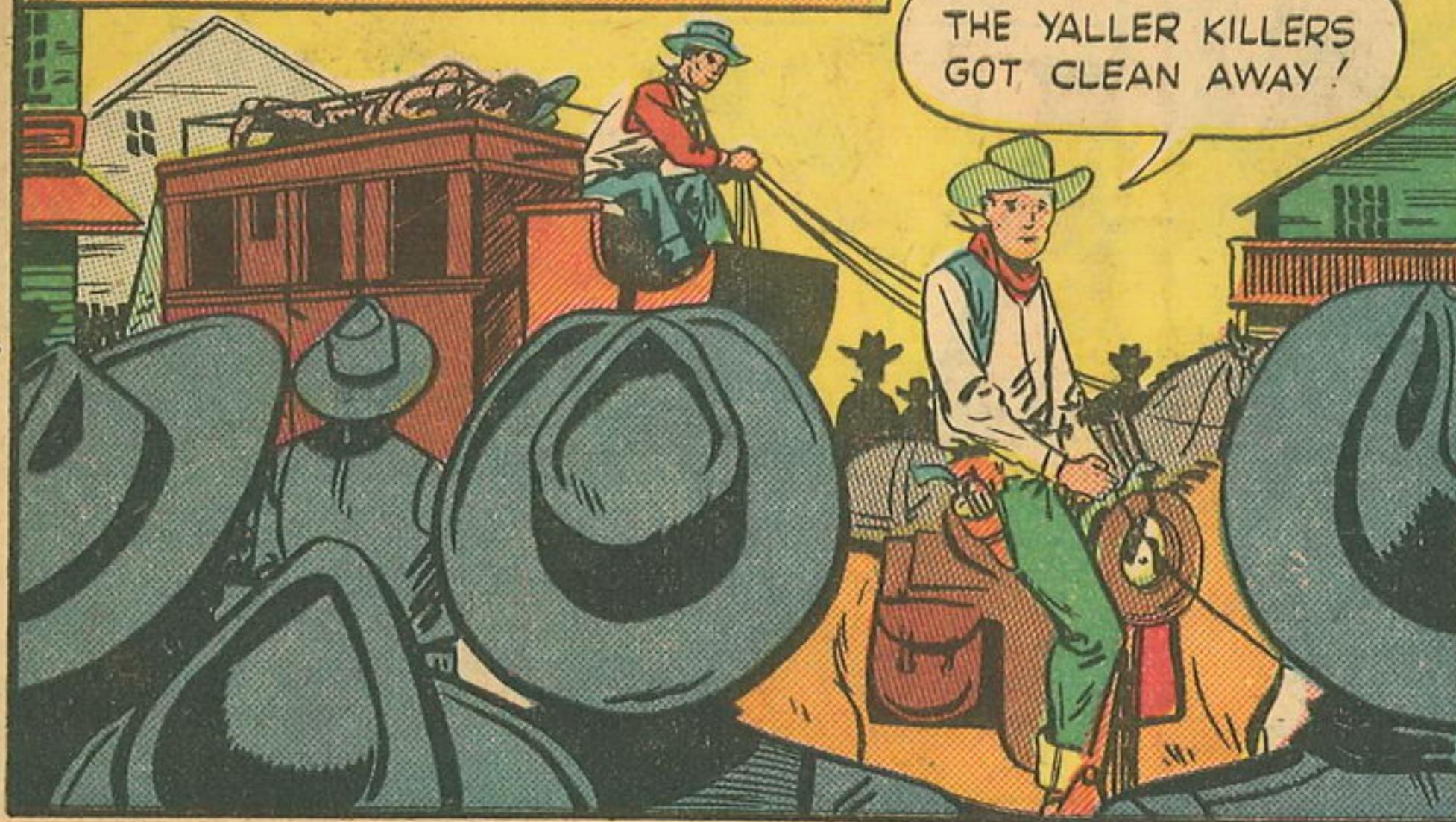


ALERT EARS HEAR THE GUNSHOTS! HORSES ARE YANKED INTO MAD GALLOPS...



# TIM HOLT

GRIM-FACED MEN LINE THE BOARDWALKS OF WARPIPE AS STAGE AFTER STAGE COMES INTO TOWN, SOME WITH SHROUDED FORMS BETWEEN THE GRAB-RAILS...



THE YALLER KILLERS GOT CLEAN AWAY!

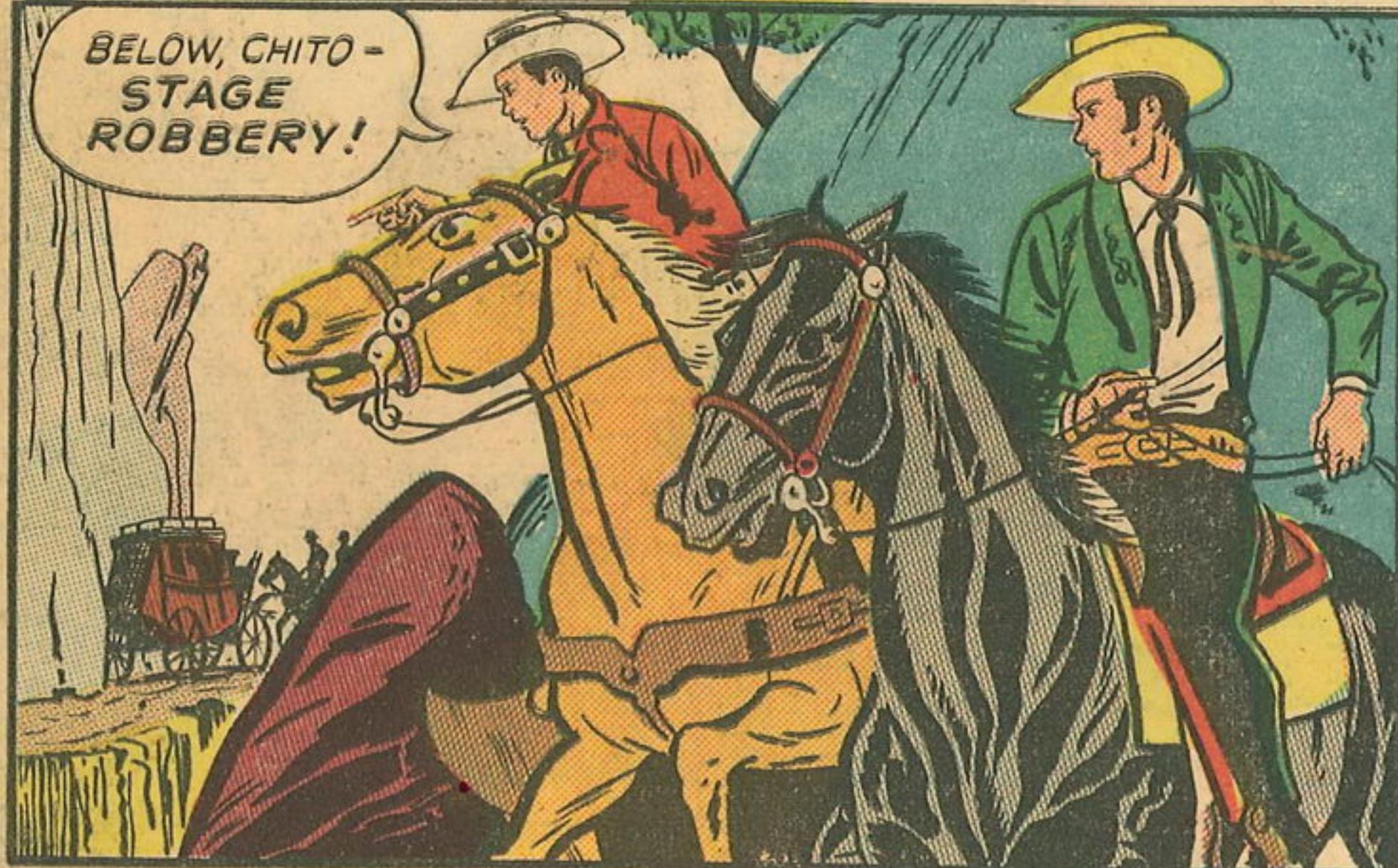
INDIGNATION MEETINGS RESULT IN A SLOGAN FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY...



SHOOT FIRST!  
ASK QUESTIONS LATER!  
ANYBODY THAT LOOKS SUSPICIOUS - GETS SHOT!

-ONLY THING TO STOP 'EM!

SOME DAYS LATER, AS TIM HOLT AND CHITO RIDE TOWARD WARPIPE...



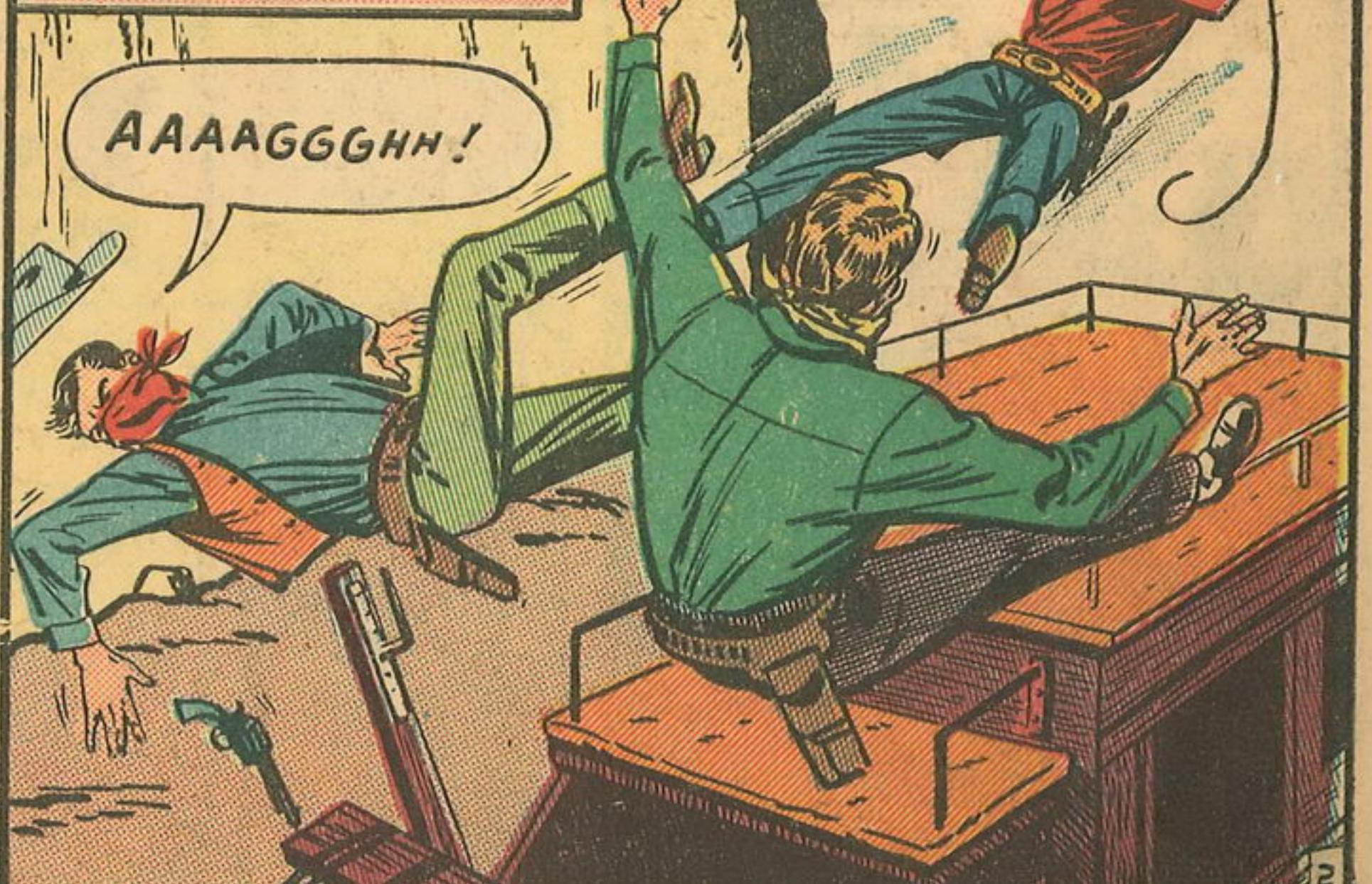
BELOW, CHITO -  
STAGE ROBBERY!

NO TIME TO GET DOWN THE SAFE WAY! GOT TO TAKE A CHANCE —!



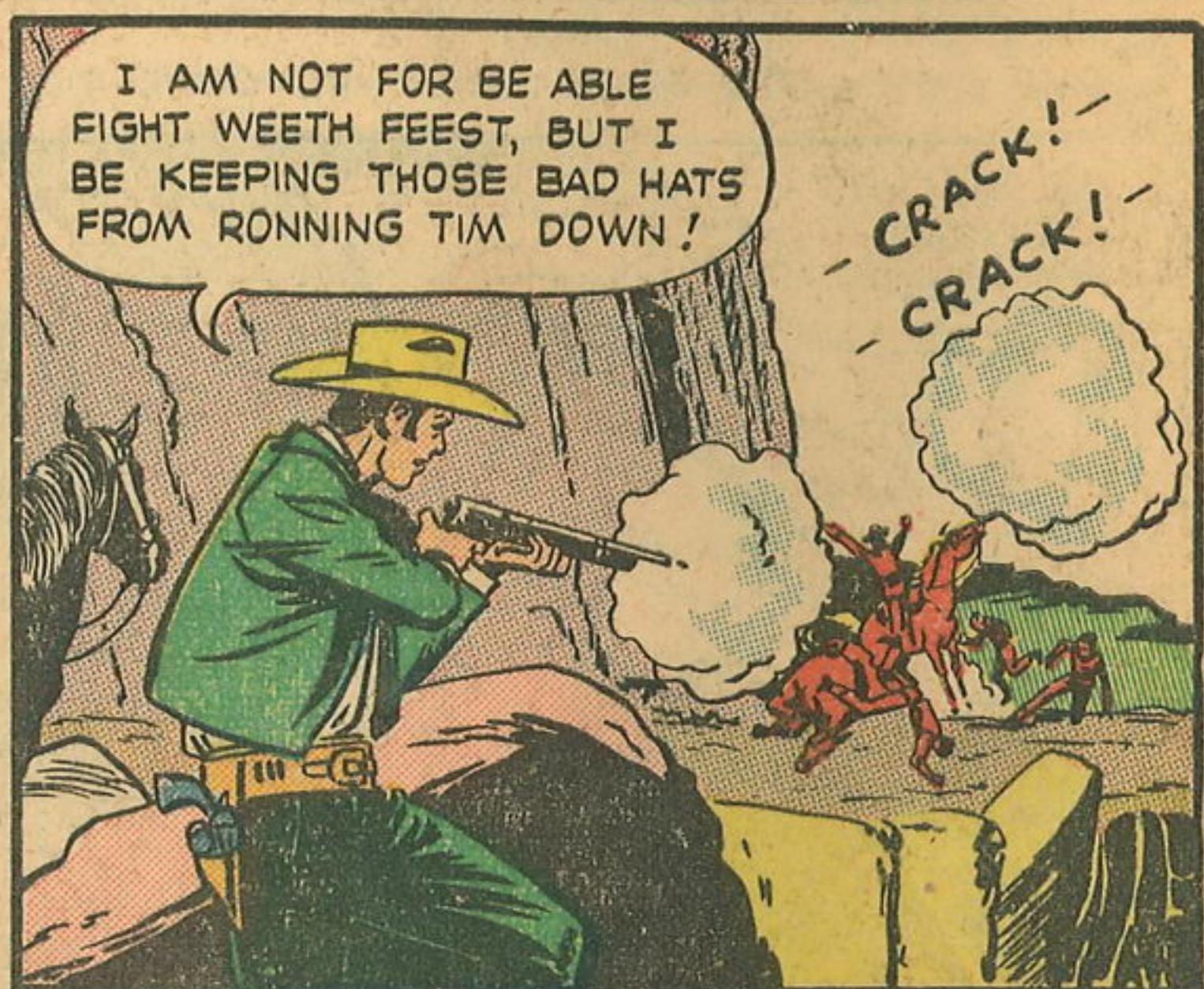
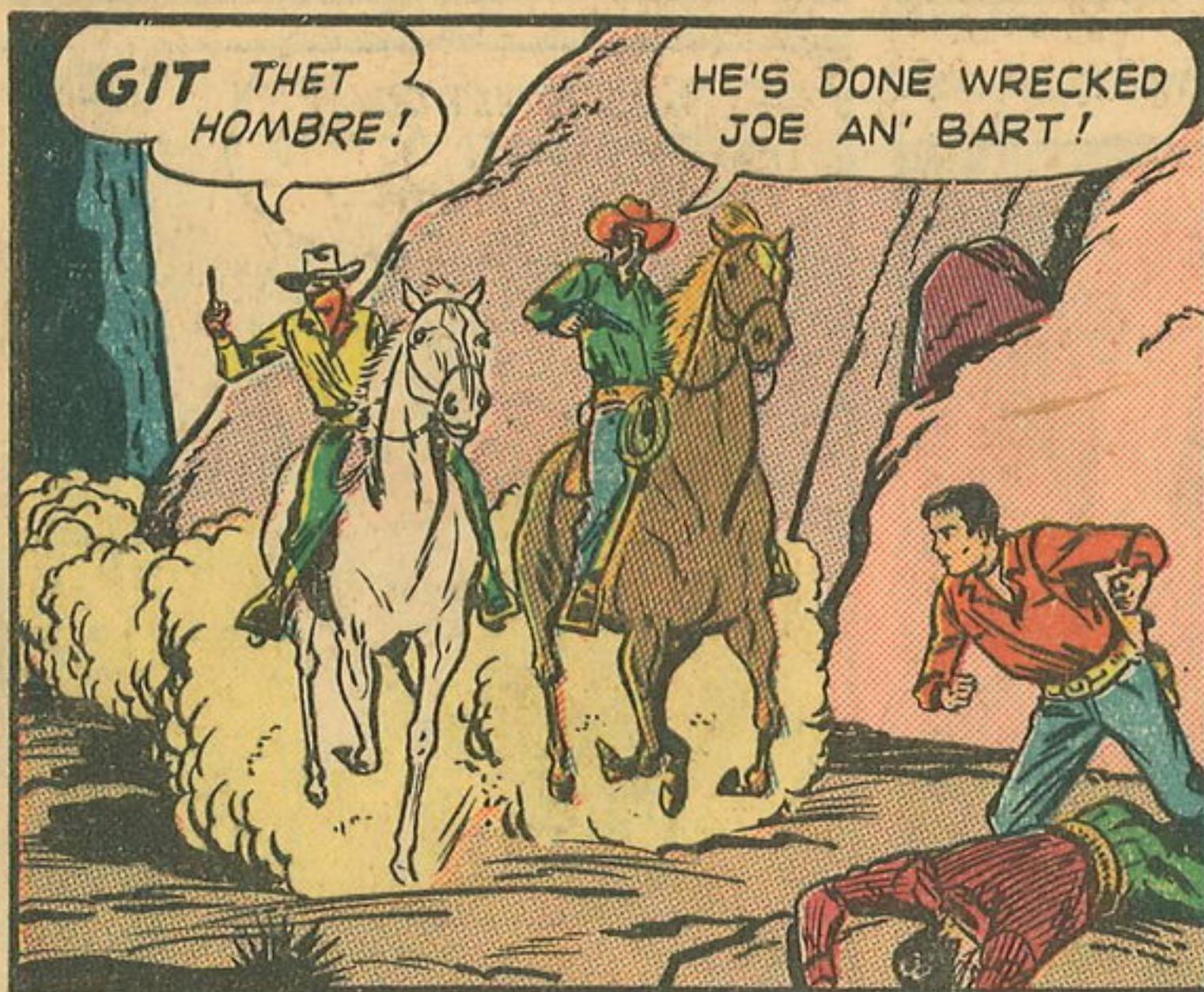
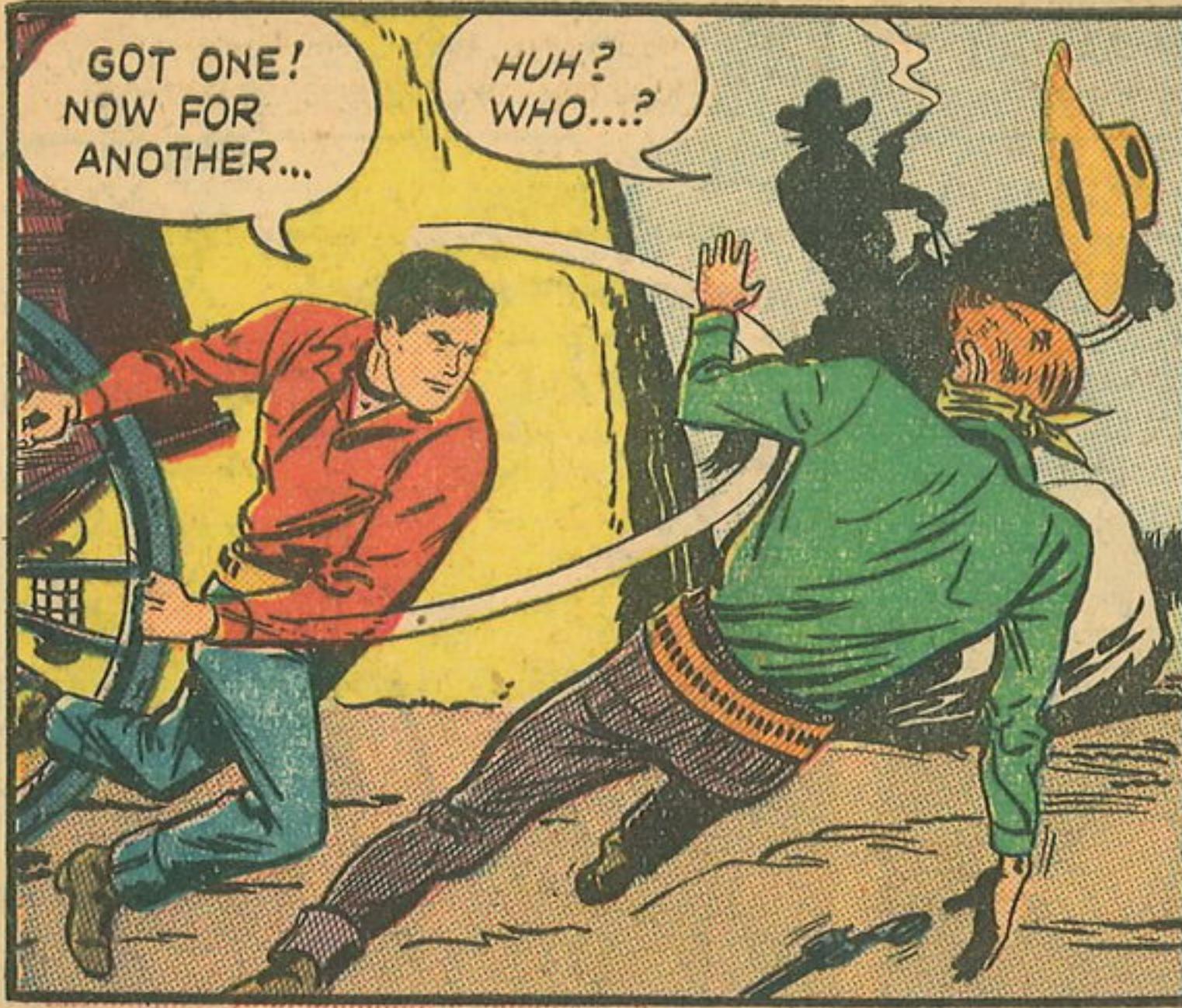
- ON THE LARIAT'S GRABBING THAT SHRUB... AND IT DID!

PLUMMETING DOWNWARDS AT TERRIFIC SPEED, TIM LANDS WITH THE FORCE OF AN AVALANCHE!



AAAAGGGHH!

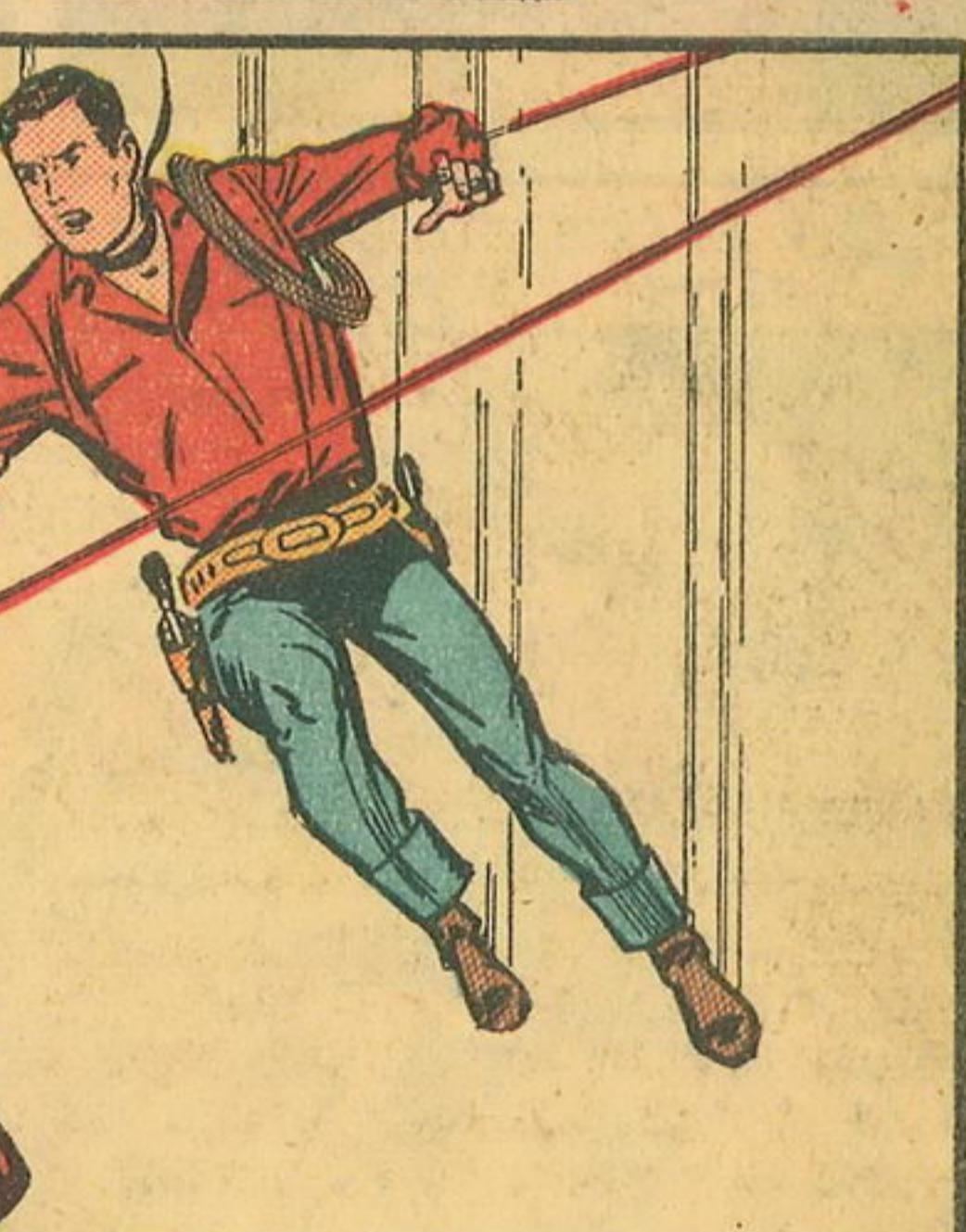
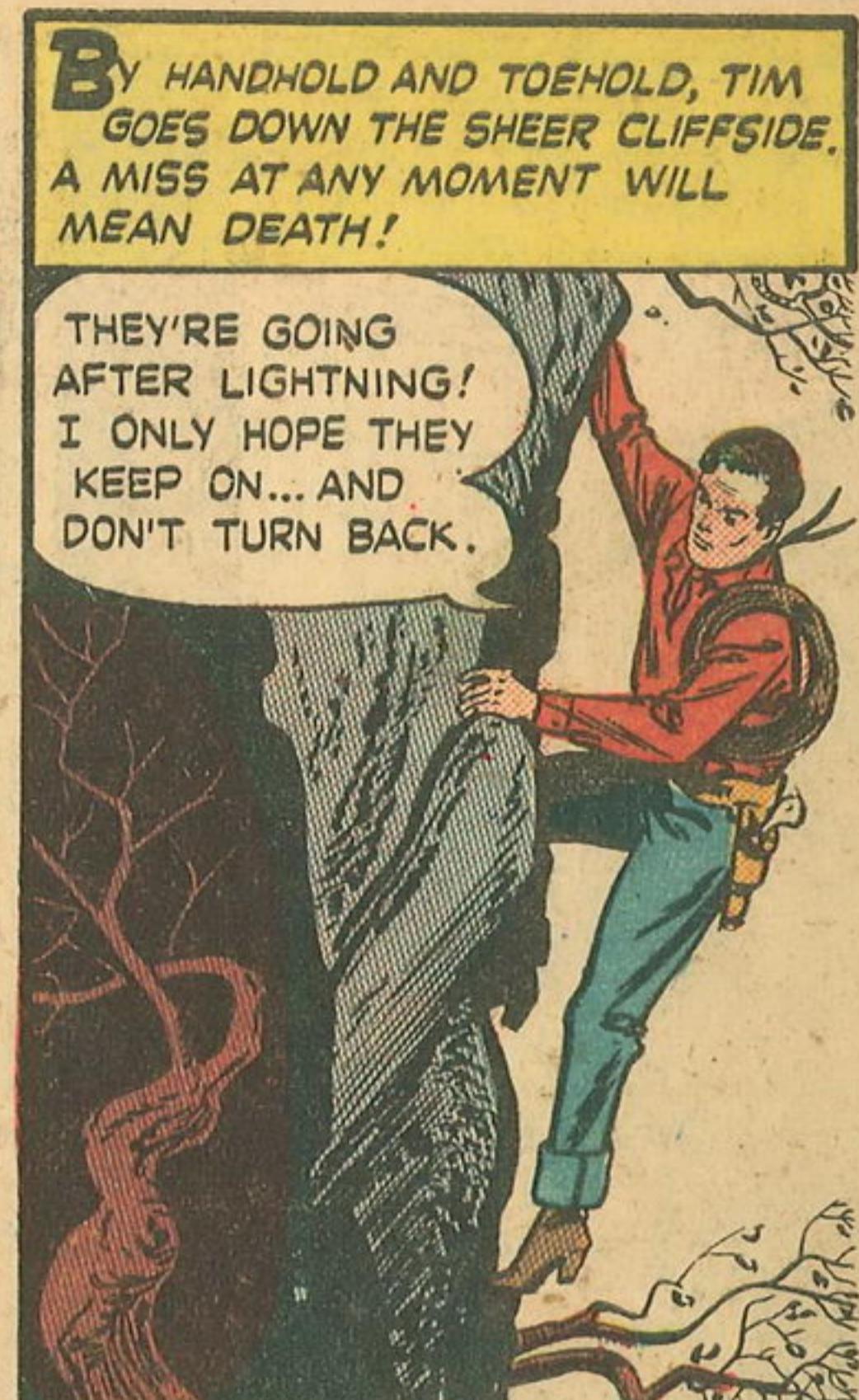
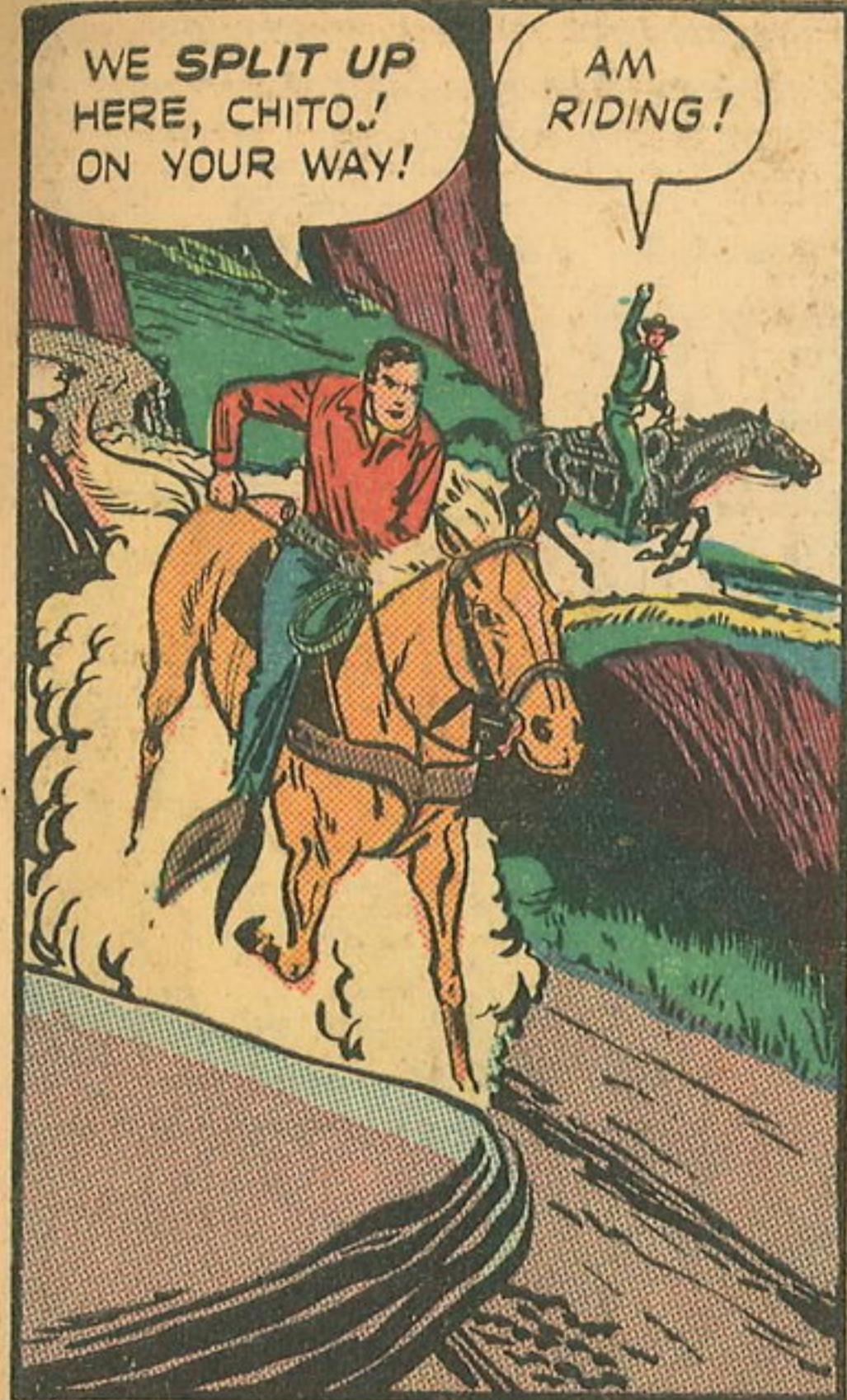
# TIM HOLT



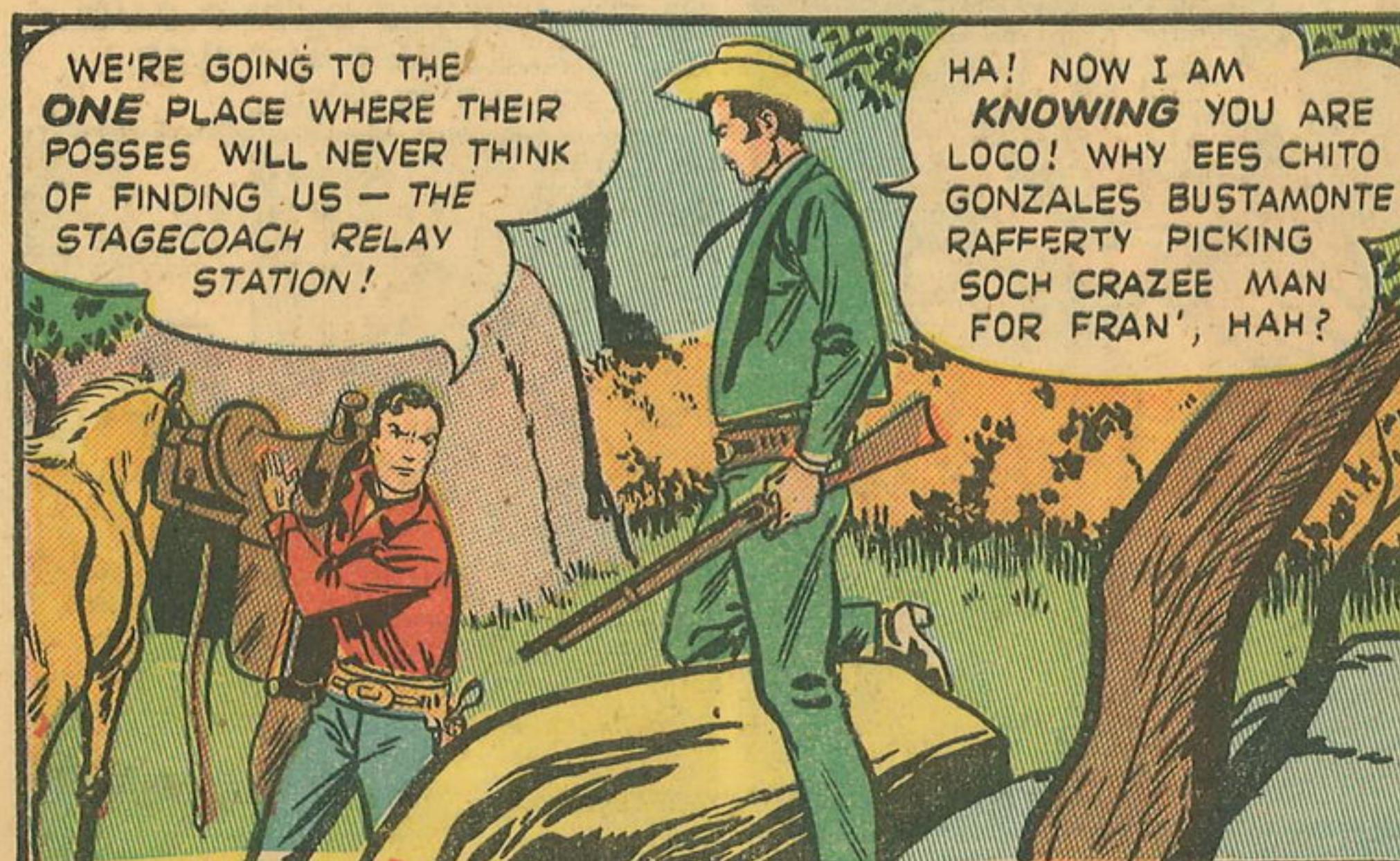
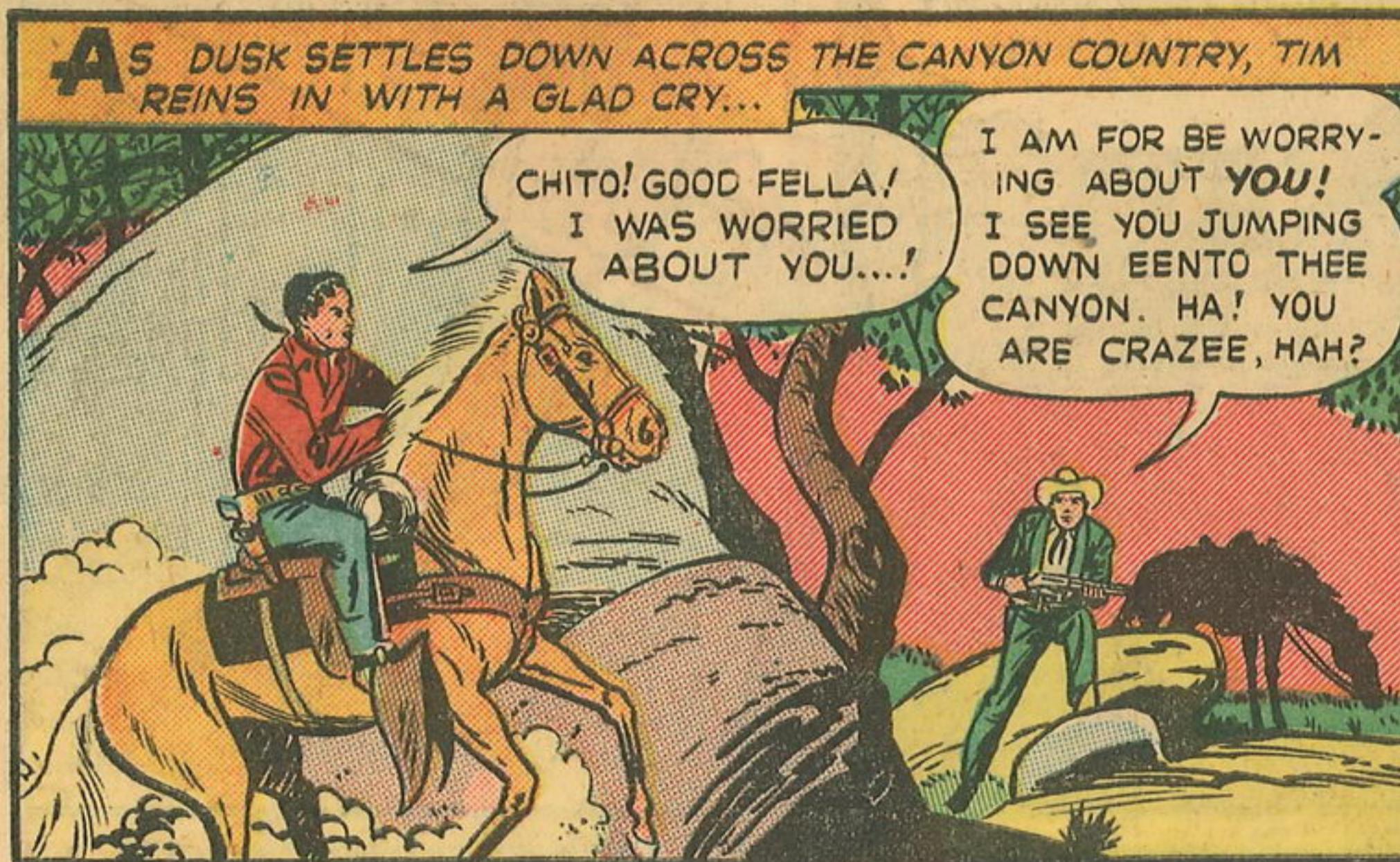
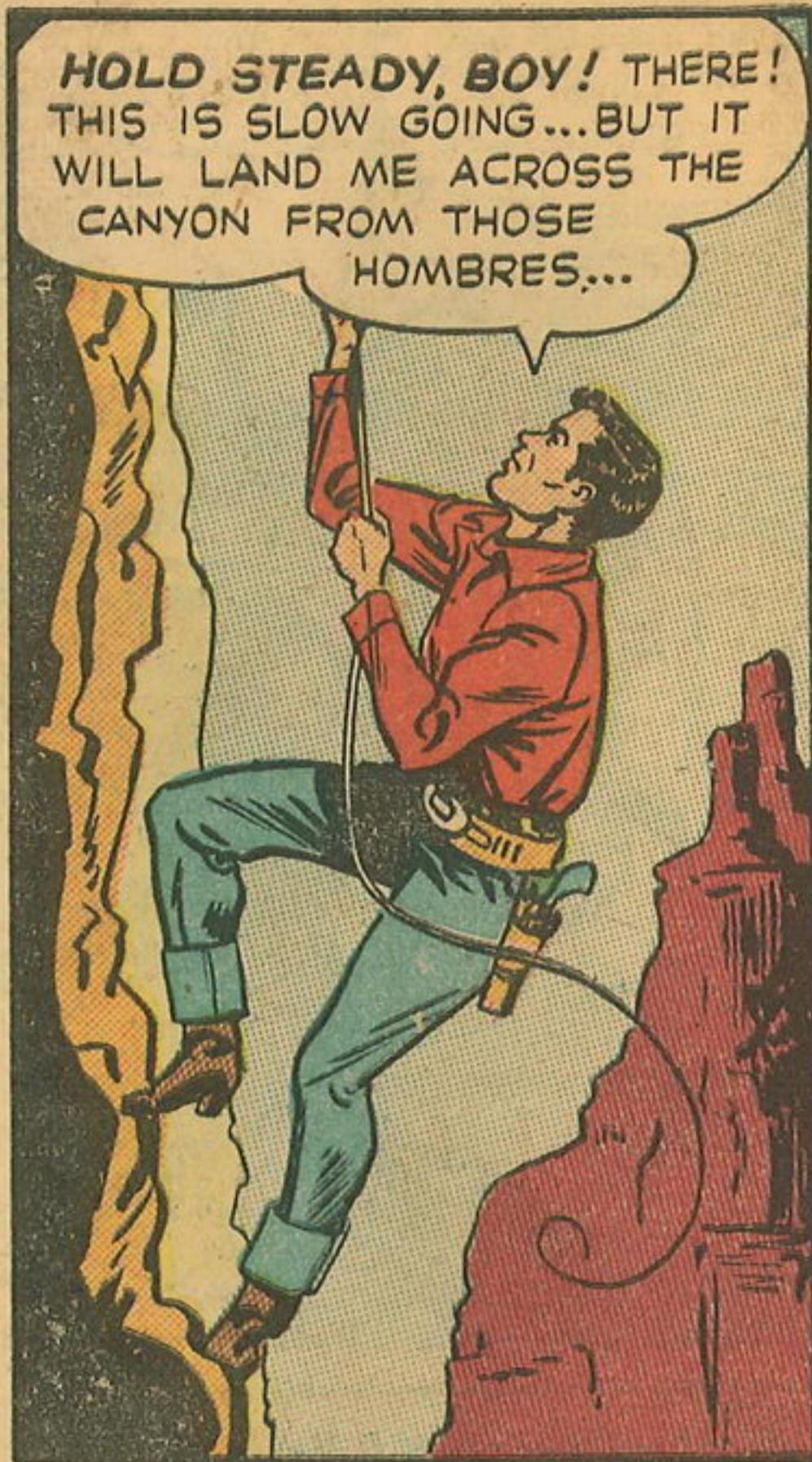
**S**OME MINUTES LATER, AS TIM AND CHITO ARE BRINGING THE STAGE TOWARD WARPIPE, ANGRY SHOUTS AND THE BARK OF SIXGUNS SEND THE HORSES INTO A GALLOP...



# TIM HOLT



# TIM HOLT

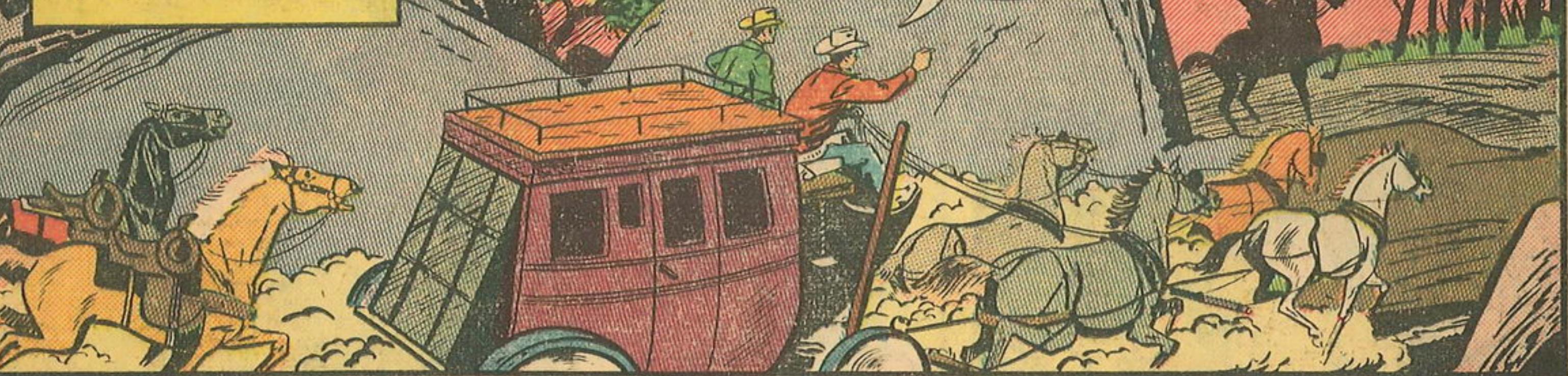


# TIM HOLT

AN HOUR LATER, AS THE WARPIPE STAGE ROUNDS A MOUNTAIN BEND...

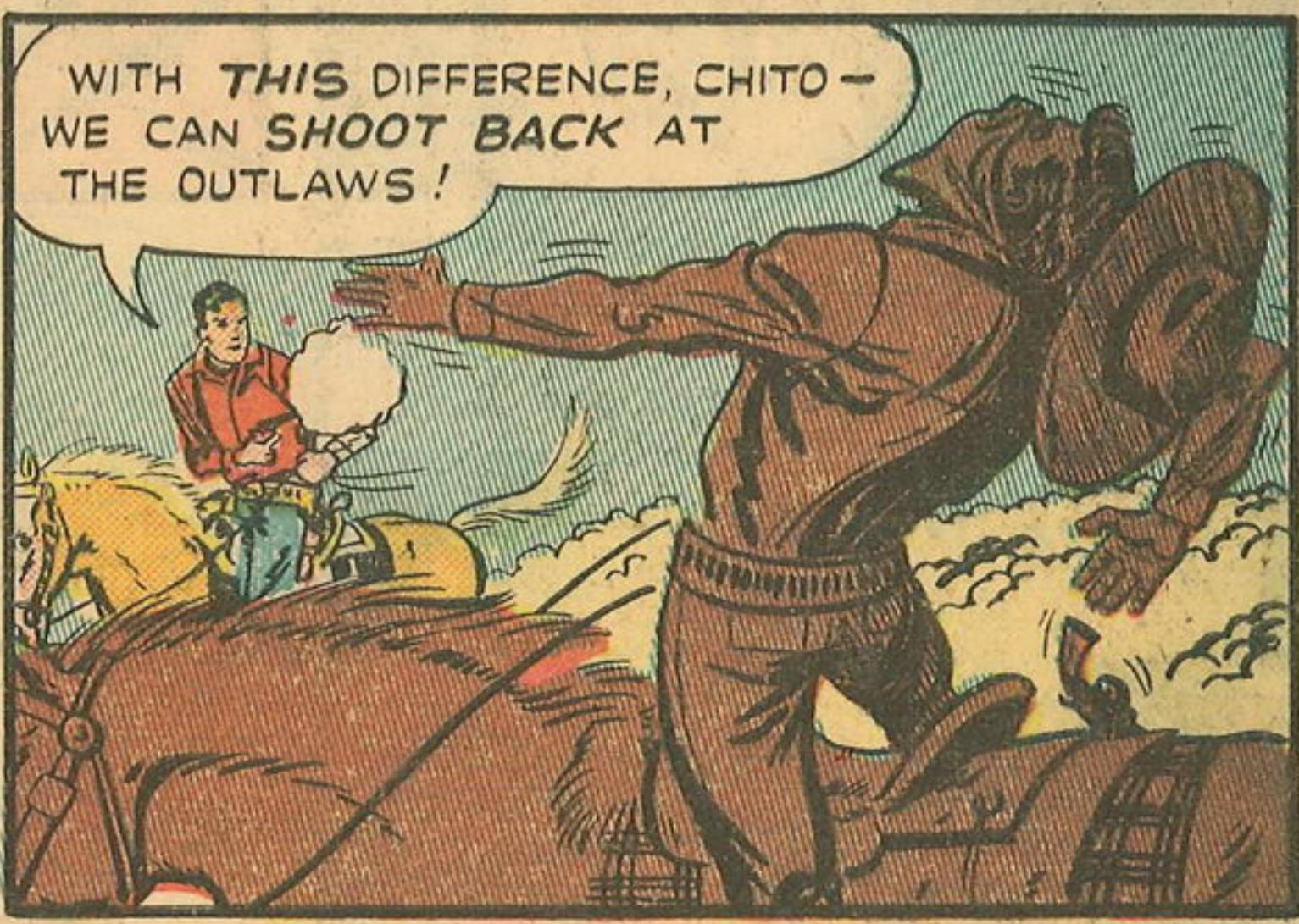
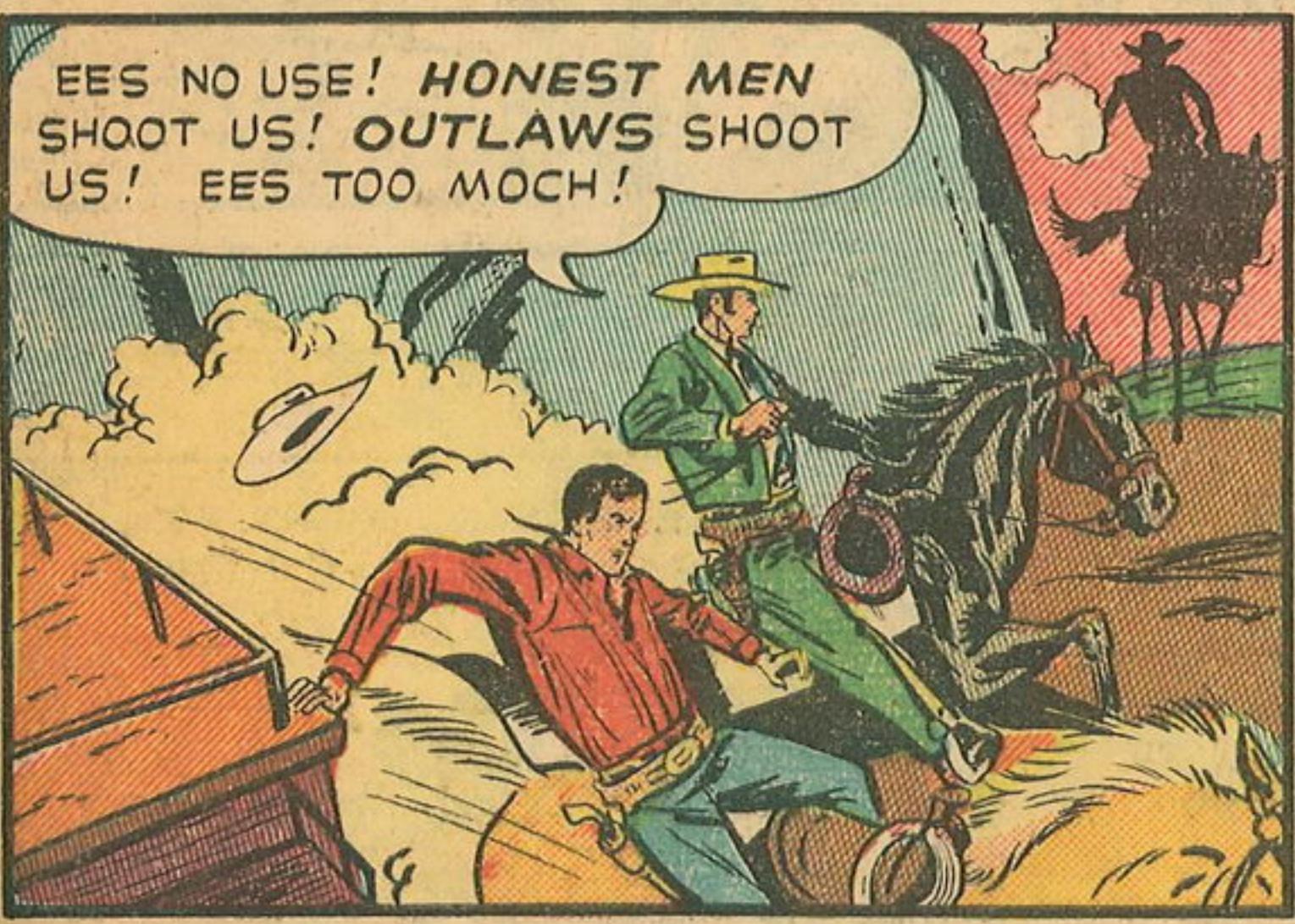
WE CAN GET TO THE NEXT TOWN IN THIS DISGUISE, AND FIND A FRIEND OR TWO TO IDENTIFY US. CHITO. I — LOOK OUT!

GIT 'EM UP, YUH HOMBRES!



EES NO USE! HONEST MEN SHOOT US! OUTLAWS SHOOT US! EES TOO MOCH!

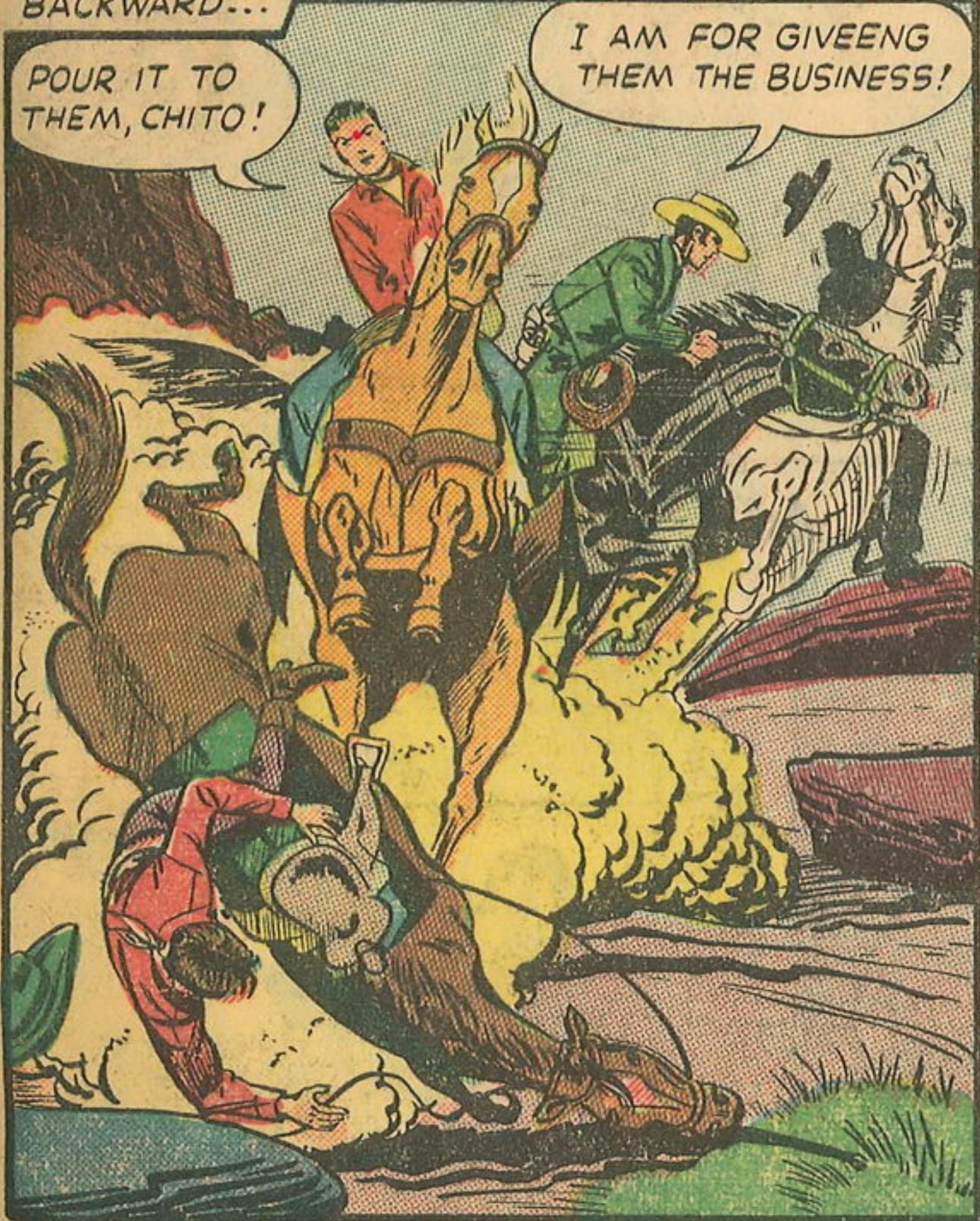
WITH THIS DIFFERENCE, CHITO — WE CAN SHOOT BACK AT THE OUTLAWS!



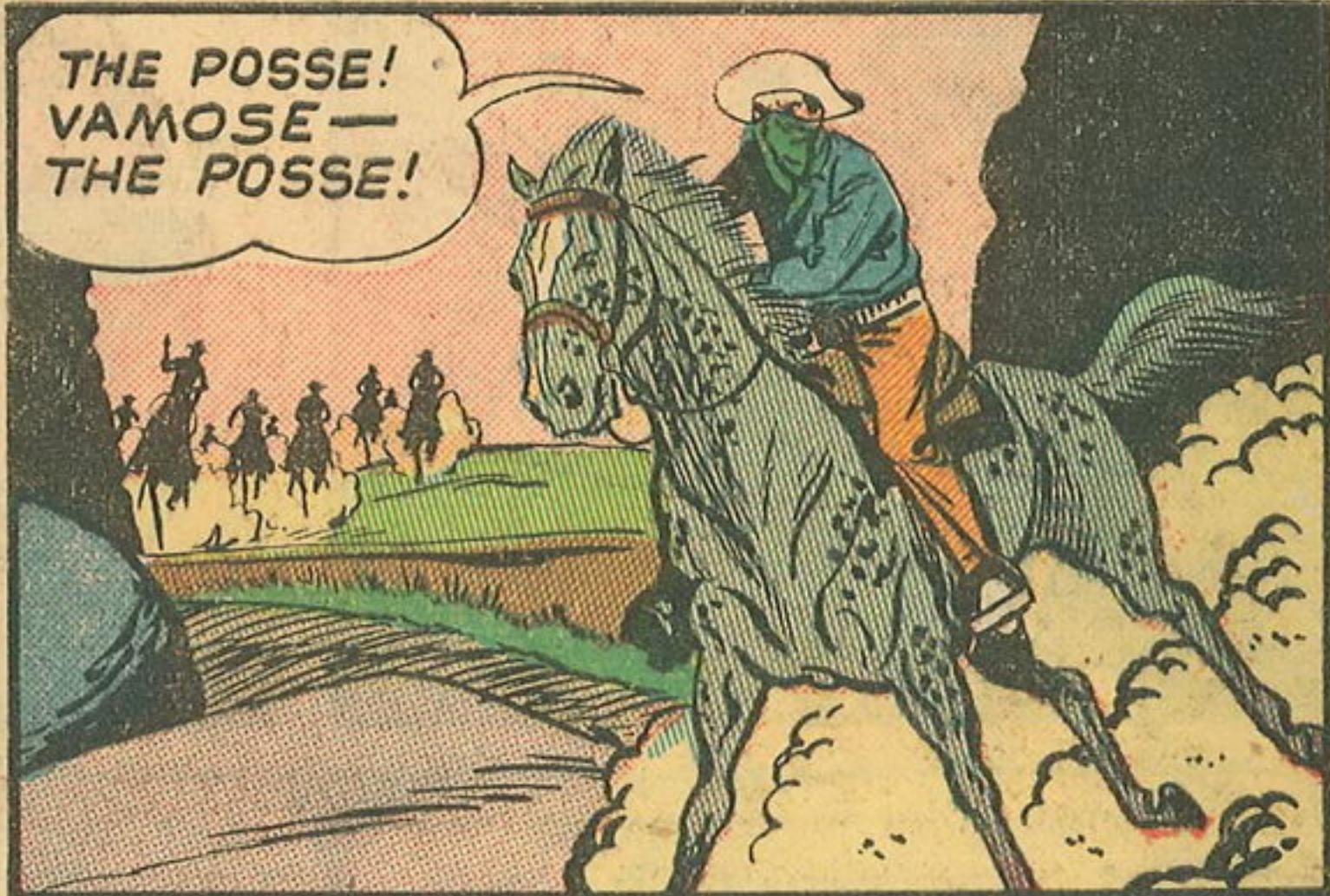
AS IF SHOT FROM CATAPULTS, TIM AND CHITO HURTLE INTO THE OUTLAWS! THE VERY FURY OF THEIR CHARGE SENDS THE GUNMEN REELING BACKWARD...

POUR IT TO THEM, CHITO!

I AM FOR GIVEENG THEM THE BUSINESS!

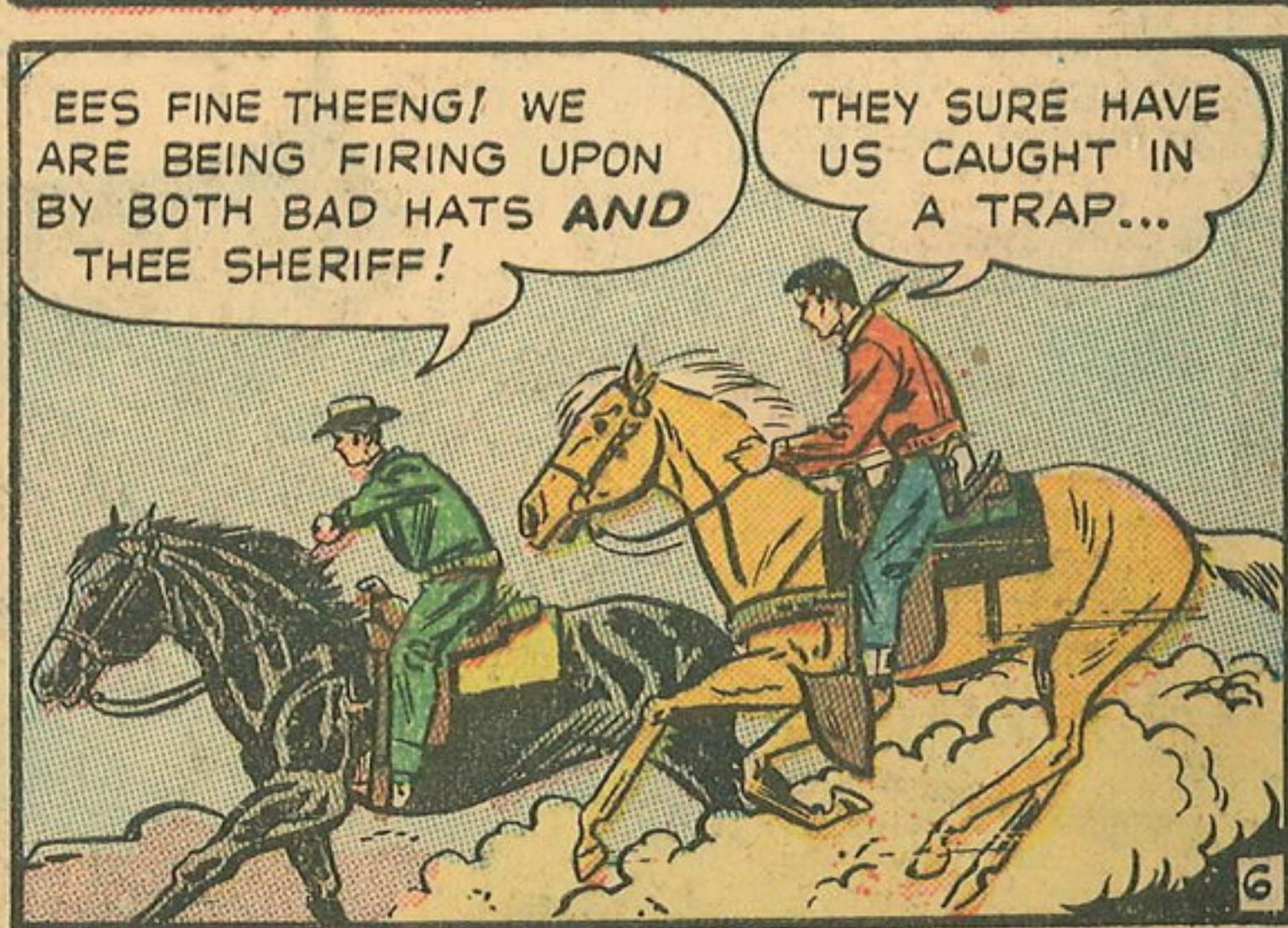


THE POSSE! VAMOSE — THE POSSE!

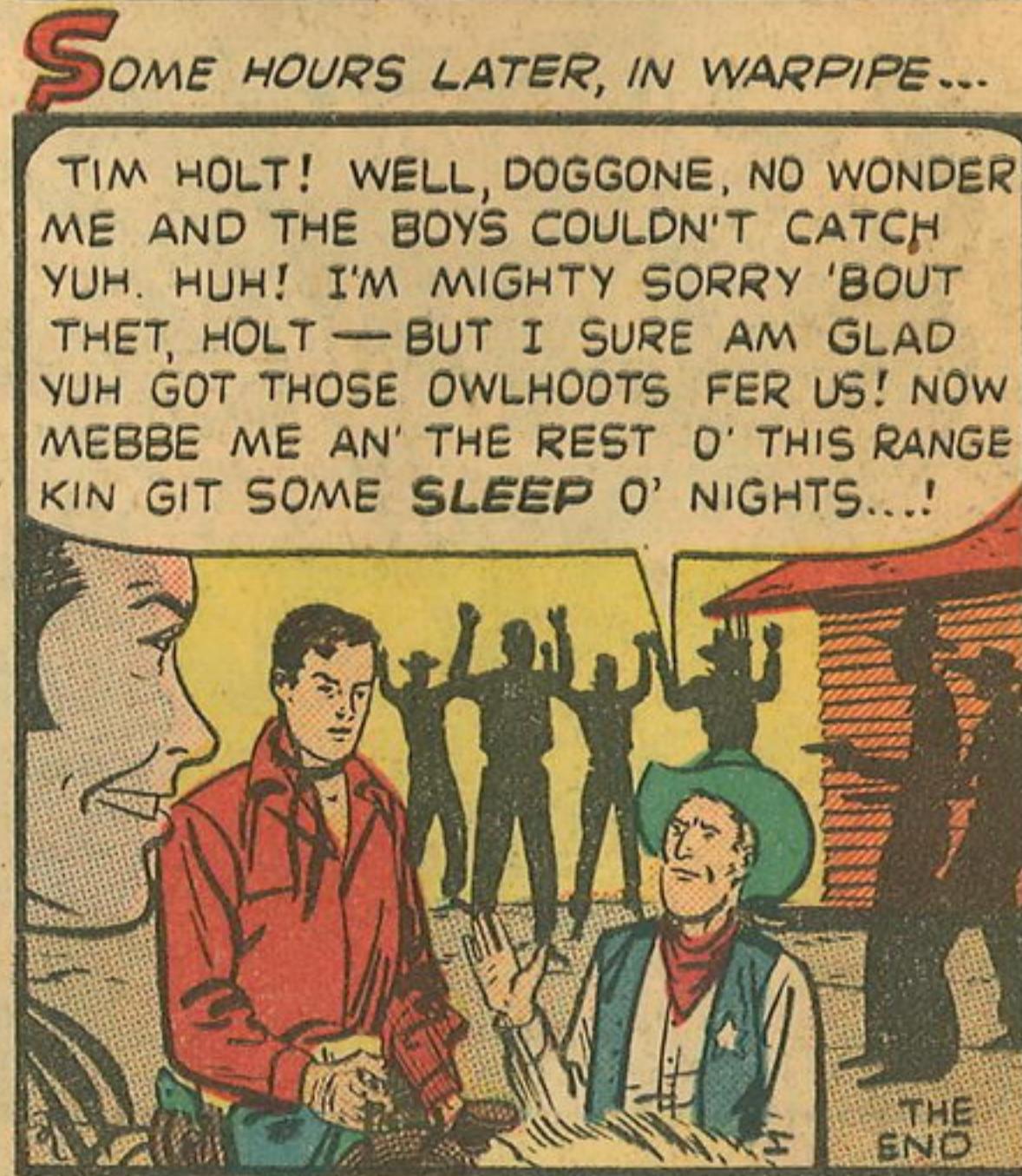
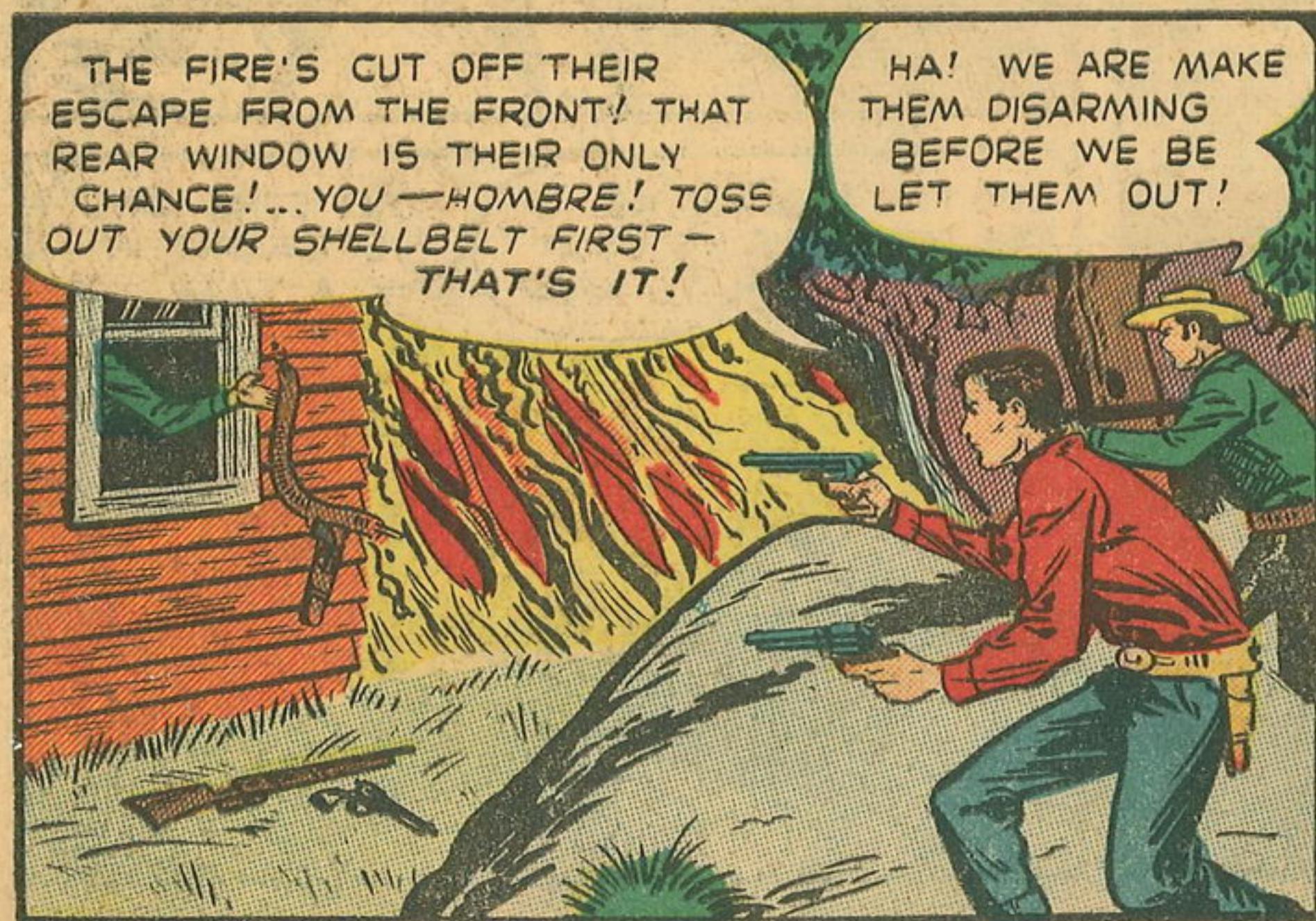
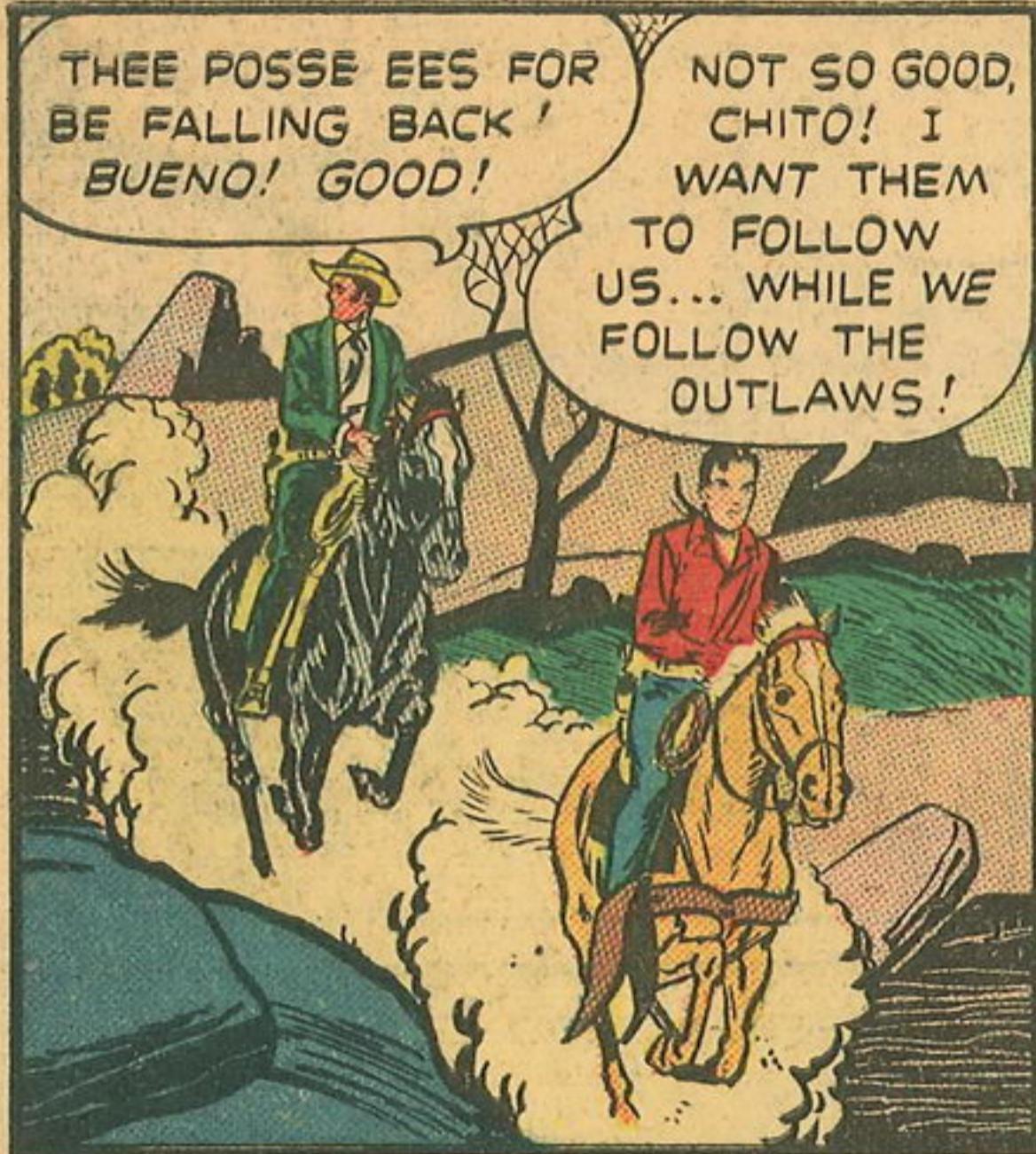


EES FINE THEENG! WE ARE BEING FIRING UPON BY BOTH BAD HATS AND THEE SHERIFF!

THEY SURE HAVE US CAUGHT IN A TRAP...

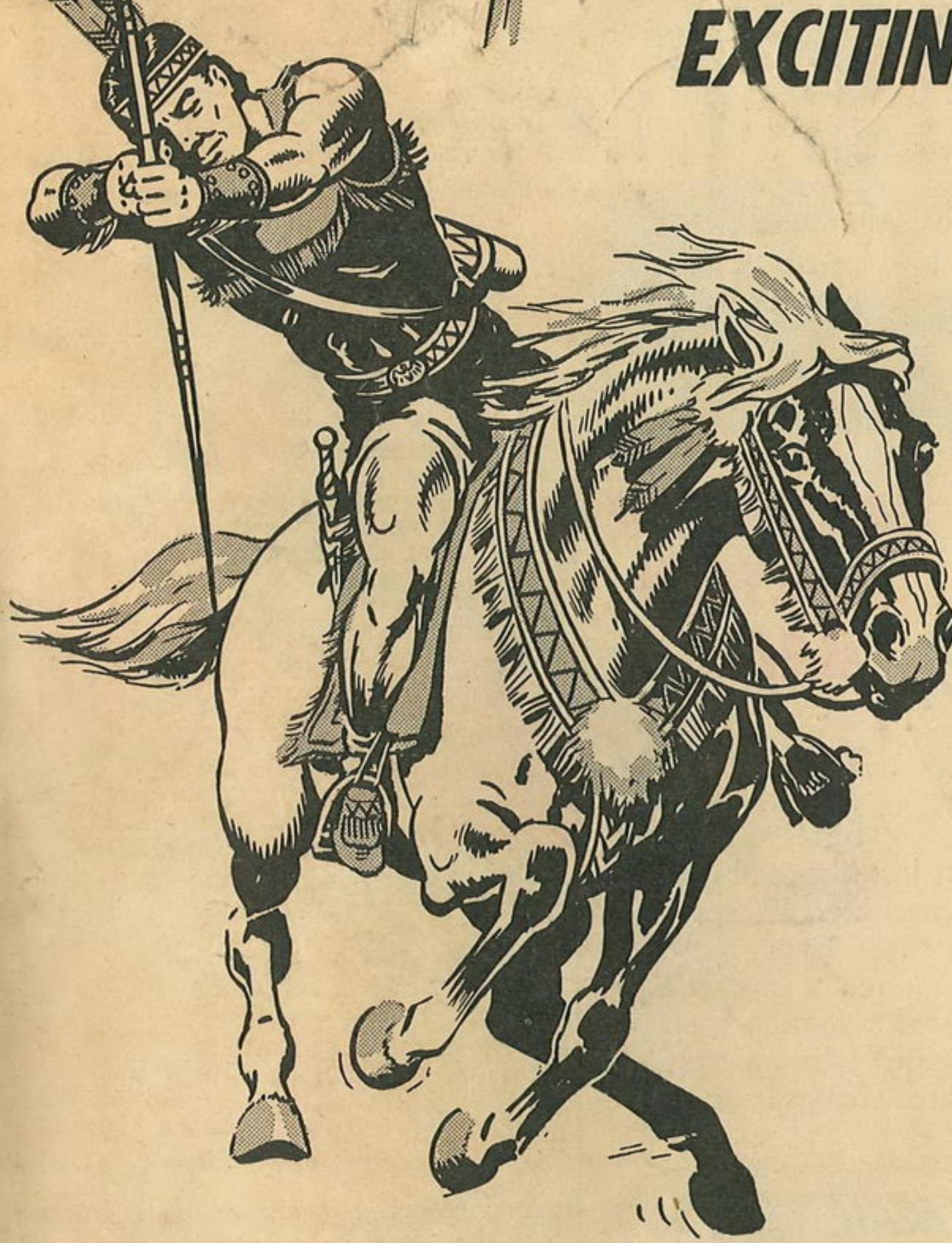


# TIM HOLT



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